



Annual Report and Financial Statements GDST Academy Trust

For the year ended 31 August 2024

Company No: 06000347 (England and Wales)

Charitable Company limited by guarantee exempt from registration

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TRUSTEES’ REPORT

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

| Board of Trustees (Academy Trust Board) | Position |
|---|---|
| Cheryl Giovannoni (Accounting Officer) | Trustee |
| Kathy Anstey | Trustee |
| Gary Stewart | * Trustee |
| Rachael Radway (resigned 31 October 2024) | * Trustee |
| Jill Galvin (appointed 1 December 2023) | Trustee |
| Sharon Wiesemann (appointed 8 January 2024) | Trustee |
| Victoria Walshaw (appointed 8 January 2024) | Trustee |
| Sarah Nardone (appointed 8 January 2024) | Trustee |
| Georgina Paton (appointed 11 March 2024) | * Trustee |
| Judith Simons (resigned 19 June 2024) | Trustee |
| Jonathan Davis (resigned 31 July 2024) | * Trustee |
| Jeremy King (appointed 19 June 2024) | Trustee |
| Farid Alexander Ghattas (appointed 6 November 2024) | * Trustee |
| Hilary Ann Ewing | Chair of Trustees |
| * denotes member of the ATB Finance, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee | |
| Academy Principals | |
| Mrs R Mahony | Birkenhead High School Academy |
| Mrs J Taylor | The Belvedere Academy |
| Company Number | 06000347 |
| Principal & Registered Office: | 10 Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DH |
| Auditors: | Grant Thornton UK LLP Chartered Accountants, Registered Auditors 30 Finsbury Square London, EC2A 1AG |
| Bankers: | National Westminster Bank plc Knightsbridge London, SW1X 9NW |

GDST Academy Trust
Annual Report and Financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

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TRUSTEES’ REPORT

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS (CONTINUED)

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Solicitors: | Withers LLP Third Floor 20 Old Bailey London EC4M 7AN |
|--------------------|---|

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The trustees of the GDST Academy Trust ('the Academy Trust'), who are also directors of the Academy Trust for the purposes of the Companies Act, present their statutory report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024. The Trustees' Report serves as both a trustees' report, and a directors' report under company law. Details of the trustees who served throughout the year except as noted are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 3.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies on pages 41 to 47 of the attached financial statements and comply with the charitable company's memorandum and articles of association, the Companies Act 2006 and 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 report has been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Constitution

The Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee (No. 06000347) and is an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents of the Academy Trust. The trustees of GDST Academy Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. Membership of the Academy Trust comprises the following:

- The Girls' Day School Trust (the initial subscriber and principal sponsor)
- The holders of the offices of Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Girls' Day School Trust *ex officio*

The Secretary of State for Education (DfE) has the right to appoint one person to the membership of the Academy Trust. This right has not yet been exercised.

The members may unanimously agree to appoint such additional members as they think fit.

Principal Activities

The Academy Trust operates two academies for girls, namely The Belvedere Academy ("Belvedere") in Liverpool and Birkenhead High School Academy ("Birkenhead" or "BHSA") on the Wirral to:

- Advance the education of girls for the public benefit; and
- to promote for the benefit of the public/social welfare the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Members' liability

Each member of the Academy Trust undertakes to contribute such amount as may be required (not exceeding £10) to the Academy Trust's assets if it should be wound up while he or she is a member or within one year after he or she ceases to be a member for the payment of the Academy Trust's debts and liabilities contracted before he or she ceases to be a member.

Trustees

The Academy Trust has provision for the following trustees (governors):

- The Girls' Day School Trust (initial subscriber and principal sponsor) may appoint up to ten sponsor trustees;
- The Chair of each academy's Local Governing Body, provided that the number does not exceed three.

All trustees receive induction training and are supplied with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, budgets, plans and other documents that they will require to undertake their role as trustee. Ongoing training is delivered on an ad hoc basis. During the period, the trustees held 3 meetings.

Potential new trustees are identified by the board, ensuring that the skills and experience of new trustees are complementary to those of existing board members.

Trustees receive no remuneration or benefits in respect of their duties as trustees but are reimbursed for expenses incurred in carrying out their duties. The amount of expenses reimbursed to trustees in the year was nil (2023: nil) (refer to Note 9 to the financial statements).

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Academy Trust purchases insurance to protect trustees from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Academy Trust business. The cost of this insurance is included in the total insurance cost, details of which are shown in note 10 to the financial statements.

Under the terms of the Academy Trust's Memorandum, the Academy Trust may enter into a contract for the supply of goods or services at cost with the Girls' Day School Trust or any of its subsidiaries at any time when a trustee is a member or employee of the Girls' Day School Trust or such trading subsidiary. Goods or services acquired under such a contract must actually be required by the Academy Trust, the level of remuneration must be reasonable in relation to the value of the goods or services and no trustee (or connected person) shall have a pecuniary interest which conflicts with the Academy Trust's interests. The Academy Trust has entered into an agreement with the Girls' Day School Trust to provide particular services on this basis (described in note 24 to the financial statements).

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Organisational structure

The organisational structure consists of three levels: the Academy Trust Board (the trustees); in addition, each academy within the Trust will have a Local Governing Body and a Senior Leadership Team.

The Academy Trust Board (the ATB) is responsible for the overall strategic direction of each academy and for those statutory duties which may not be delegated to sub-committees. The principal roles of the ATB are:

- to set the Trust's strategy;
- to monitor each academy's performance against key performance indicators;
- to maintain the financial stability of the Trust;
- to review the Trust's policies and procedures that provide internal control and mitigate risk;
- to receive and consider assurances in relation to internal control concerning risk and governance as appropriate.

The Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) are committees of the Academy Trust Board (ATB). Legal responsibility for the Academy Trust lies with the ATB but the ATB relies on advice and support from the LGBs. The key purposes of the LGBs are:

- to monitor the academy's financial and academic performance;
- to develop strategic policies which reflect the academy's vision and ethos;
- to promote the academy and foster links with the local community.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of each academy will typically include the Principal, Vice Principal, Assistant Vice Principals and Finance Director. The SLT control the academy at an executive level implementing the policies approved by the Academy Trust Board.

The salaries of the Principals are determined by the ATB. The Principals are responsible for the appointment of staff and their salary grading. For those members of SLT on the teachers' pay scale, salaries and other allowances are increased in accordance with the annual percentage increase agreed for teachers in the maintained sector by the Secretary of State for Education. For SLT members on the support staff pay scale, the rates of pay which will apply are those generally prevailing for comparable employment in the public sector and are increased in line with increases agreed by the appropriate national negotiating bodies in those sectors.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Trade Unions Facility Time Relevant Union Officials

| Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the year | Full-time equivalent employee number |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 3 | 3 |

Percentage of time spent on facility time

| Percentage of time | Number of employees |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 0% | 1 |
| 1%-50% | 2 |
| 51%-99% | 0 |
| 100% | 0 |

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

| | |
|--|--------|
| Total cost of facility time (£'000) | 1 |
| Total pay bill (£'000) | 13,207 |
| % of total pay bill spent on facility time, calculated as: (total cost of facility time / total pay bill) X 100 | 0% |

Paid trade union activities

| | |
|---|------|
| Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours | 100% |
|---|------|

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

The Academy Trust works closely with its principal sponsor, the Girls' Day School Trust, its co-sponsor of the Belvedere Academy, the DfE, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Local Education Authorities and other local organisations. Girls' Day School Trust provides certain services including IT and payroll under service agreements.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES FOR PUBLIC BENEFIT

The principal objective of the Academy Trust is to advance education for the public benefit, by establishing, maintaining, operating and developing schools, including but not limited to academies, offering a broad curriculum with a strong emphasis on the specialisms specified in the relevant Funding Agreements. In setting the Trust's objectives and planning its activities, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The catchment area for the Belvedere Academy is Merseyside and the surrounding areas, whilst that for the Birkenhead High School Academy is the Wirral and the surrounding areas. Each academy's admissions policy is included in its Funding Agreement and applications for places at the academies are made in accordance with the relevant local authority's co-ordinated admission arrangements.

The Academy Trust aims to work with others to create a healthy, safe environment within which all of its pupils can enjoy learning, make progress and achieve high standards. Each pupil is encouraged to participate fully and make a positive contribution to their academy and the wider community and ultimately become successful, motivated, well-adjusted adults who achieve economic well-being.

In addition, the Academy Trust promotes the provision of its facilities for recreation, sports and other leisure time occupation for the benefit of the public/social welfare in the local community.

STRATEGIC REPORT

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The following paragraphs present a review of the significant activities undertaken by the Academy Trust during the year to further its charitable purposes for public benefit.

Key performance indicators

Pupil Numbers

Demand for entry to both academies continues to be strong, with applications far exceeding the available number of places in the Junior School and the Senior Schools at Year 7. Pupil numbers in the Sixth Form are a key performance indicator of the Academy Trust. Belvedere continues to sustain close to capacity numbers whilst Birkenhead High School Academy (BHSA) faces increasing competition from other local providers and Sixth Form retention and recruitment remains an area of particular focus.

Pupil numbers at BHSA currently stand at 28 in Nursery, 393 in Juniors, 786 in Seniors and 126 in the Sixth Form, making a total of 1,207 (September 2023 including Nursery : 1,207). The junior school Pupil Admission Number (PAN) is 56, whilst the senior school PAN increased by 27 to 135 in September 2018.

Belvedere is heavily over-subscribed; the academy is at capacity with pupil numbers standing currently at 1,131 (September 2023: 1,119). The local authority funded an expansion to the current site enabling the PAN to increase by 25 to 155 from September 2019 with a further expansion and increase to 180 from September 2022. This again has been funded by the local authority driven by the popularity of the school and increased demand for places in the local vicinity. The Sixth Form continues to be a popular option with

TRUSTEES' REPORT

many of Belvedere students choosing to stay on after GCSEs. The Sixth Form currently stands at 267, with 45 pupils being recruited from external schools in Year 12 this year.

Academic results

The academic results of the academies is also a key performance indicator. Results that are usually monitored include Progress 8, Attainment 8 and Key stage 1 and 2 measures.

GCSE and A-Level examinations were held along with primary school formal assessments.

Academic results are a key performance indicator and results demonstrate the Academy Trust exceeds National averages in many areas. Results are shown below.

| Key Stage 4 | 23/24 | 23/24 | 23/24 | 22/23 | 22/23 | 22/23 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| | Birkenhead | Belvedere | National (#) | Birkenhead | Belvedere | National (#) |
| Progress 8 | +0.44 | +0.22 | 0.00 | +0.65 | +0.11 | 0.00 |
| Attainment 8 | 47.48 points | 55.91 Points | 46.8 points | 51.1 points | 54.6 points | 45.0 points |
| % of students gaining Grade C/4 or above in English & Maths | 71.3% | 78.3% | 66.6% | 78% | 76% | 65% |
| % of students gaining Grade 5 or above in English & Maths | 38% | 61.1% | 47.1% | 51% | 55% | 42% |

| Key Stage 5 | 23/24 | 23/24 | 23/24 | 22/23 | 22/23 | 22/23 |
|------------------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| | Birkenhead | Belvedere | National (#) | Birkenhead | Belvedere | National (#) |
| Grades at A*/A | 17.2% | 22.2% | 27.8% | 23% | 23% | 26.5% |
| Grades at A*-B | 36.6% | 48.5% | 53.9% | 51% | 54% | 52.7% |
| Overall Pass Rate at A level | 96.3% | 97.6% | 97.2% | 98% | 98% | 97.2% |

(#) National Boys' & Girls' figure

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Academic results (continued)

| Early Years Attainment | 23/24 | 23/24 | 22/23 | 22/23 |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| | Birkenhead | Local Authority (Wirral) | Birkenhead | Local Authority (Wirral) |
| Good Level of Development | 79% | 66% | 78% | 65% |

A Good Level of Development is achieved at the end of Foundation 2 when pupils achieve at least the 'expected' level in all prime areas plus all numeracy and literacy areas.

| Key Stage 1 Attainment | 23/24 | 22/23 |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Phonics Screening Check Year 1 | 93% | 95% |
| Working at or beyond the national standard in | | |
| Reading | 63% | 73% |
| Writing | 51% | 63% |
| Maths | 42% | 64% |
| Key Stage 2 Attainment and Progress | 23/24 | 22/23 |
| Reading - % at and beyond national standard | 90% | 77% |
| Reading - Progress score* | +2.2 | +1.92 |
| | | |
| Writing - % at and beyond national standard | 74% | 73% |
| Writing – Progress score* | -1.2 | +0.91 |
| | | |
| Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling - % at and beyond national standard | 77% | 71% |
| | | |
| Maths - % at and beyond national standard | 79% | 71% |
| Maths - Progress score* | +0.8 | -0.42 |

* Most schools will have progress scores between –5 and +5. If a school has a progress score of 0 this means that on average their pupils achieved similar results at the end of KS2 (end of year 6) to pupils in other schools with similar results at the end of KS1 (end of year 2).

Highlights of the year Birkenhead High School Academy

Academic success was seen throughout the academy with some of the highest progress scores achieved in the last 8 years. Excellence and variety were also prevalent in our enrichment and leadership programmes. Our cadets corps is one of the largest all-girls units in the UK, affiliated to the Royal Army Medical Corps and all the benefits that it gives our students. A major highlight for the cadets was a trip to Norway, which they will never forget. Student leadership is at the very core of activities at BHSA and last year was no exception with sixth formers at GDST LEAD events at the LSE and Junior School children attending

TRUSTEES' REPORT

events at the Royal Institution of Science. Each year group in the Junior School was paired up with an older year in the Senior School for a year's programme of leadership opportunities, which culminated in a whole academy Olympic games at the end of the summer term. This also fostered our school's community ethos and was a celebration of diversity and cultures for all age groups.

There were many opportunities for learning away from the classroom last year, ranging from Junior School children enjoying a week at Manor Adventure in Shropshire to the Senior School students travelling to New York, Normandy and the French Alps.

We are well known locally as a "reading school" with our two well stocked libraries and students enjoying regular visits from a variety of authors. One highlight of the year was Cressida Cowell, author of the "How to train your dragon" series, who inspired many in the audience to read more and put pen to paper. Another inspirational visitor to school was an alumna, Lizzie Waterworth, who many recognised as the voice actor, who has voiced the characters of Horrid Henry and many other CBeebies characters. She was at BHSA to support our work on oracy with her book, "How to talk so people will listen" which has strategies for children to boost their confidence in speaking. Lizzie also was the guest speaker at our annual prize giving where we celebrated the A level, BTEC and GCSE successes of the year.

The arts had an extremely successful year with many musical events and a whole school production of Annie. This show was supported by another famous alumna, Dame Patricia Routledge, whose generosity has ensured that our theatre is well equipped for future productions for all of the school and our local community to enjoy. We now also have an annual prize for the theatrical arts donated by Dame Patricia.

We completed some transformational capital projects during the year; our nursery now has an impressive new playground and our astro turf pitch has been completely rejuvenated and used by the whole school community and other local groups.

The Belvedere Academy

We were delighted to start the academic year 2023 with some very pleasing examination results. Attainment at KS4 and KS5 was impressive and placed us in the top few secondary schools in Liverpool. The vast majority of our Year 13 pupils were able to confirm places at their chosen universities or on the Higher Apprenticeship schemes of their choice. We also welcomed record numbers of both internal and external students into our Sixth Form ready to start KS5 courses in September 2023.

During the year, we continued to focus on providing high quality teaching for all our pupils with teachers working together to ensure that they were meeting the needs of all and being ambitious for everyone. Our Rising Stars and Oracy projects allowed pupils the opportunity to stretch themselves through and beyond the work that they were doing in the classroom. All pupils engaged in oracy work, masterclasses and showcasing what they had learned. Many attended additional opportunities to hear from speakers from a range of disciplines. Year 9 pupils were given the opportunity to participate in the Higher Project Qualification

TRUSTEES' REPORT

course and pupils in Year 10 and 12 also attended Aspire Liverpool events to find out more about applying to Oxford and Cambridge and other Russell Group universities.

Our Reading strategy was ongoing and saw regular testing of all our pupils' reading ages and intervention for all whose reading ages lagged behind their chronological age. Alongside that, all teachers benefited from professional development in teaching phonics and our librarian continues to spearhead whole academy events designed to promote a love of reading. We were visited by Matt Lucas and our reading patron, writer Cynthia Murphy as well as Robin Stevens.

During this year, we also launched our RISE programme. RISE stands for Repeaters, Inclusive Teams, Stress busters and Energisers and is the programme of physical activity each form has along with their form teachers once a week in addition to and separate from their PE lessons. The form participates in a range of physical activity from skipping to Kinball to table tennis with the effect of showing pupils the importance of physical activity in every day life from a physical and mental health perspective.

Enrichment at Belvedere also continues to flourish with the majority of PE, music and drama enrichments occurring during the school day to ensure that all pupils can attend. We enjoyed some amazing PE success including being Merseyside swimming champions, attending numerous fixtures across Merseyside and participating in GDST sports events. We also enjoyed wonderful music at the Winter Concert and at Prizegiving. The year culminated with a great production of "Legally Blonde" in the school hall.

Student voice and leadership opportunities continue including: Student Leaders and Senior Student Leadership Team, Equality and Diversity team - sixth form led with members across all year groups, Just Like Us, Mentors in Violence Prevention programme (Year 10 with impact on Year 7 and 8), Aspire Liverpool (Oxbridge) in Year 10 and 12, DofE (bronze and silver), CCF, Peer Mentors, the Autism Group, the Positive Programme, Mental Health Ambassadors, English as Additional Language ambassadors and Reading Ambassadors. We are also involved in the city-wide Violence Against Women and Girls conversation and the Youth Parliament, Girls Network, Migrant Leaders (Year 12), GDST LEAD (Year 12), support for our Young Carers and the National Citizenship Service (Year 11).

Culture day was, again, a great success in Spring 2024 and we have become part of the Anti Racism in Schools Award run by The Anthony Walker Foundation. We are also working on the Eco Green Flag award to reflect the brilliant work we are doing around becoming more environmentally aware.

The end of 2023/24 also saw the completion of our most recent, local authority funded, building project giving us an additional 6 classrooms and improved outdoor space.

TRUSTEES' REPORT**PROMOTING THE SUCCESS OF THE ACADEMY TRUST**

The Trustees have promoted the success of the Academy Trust for the benefit of its members and stakeholders and in doing so have given regard to:

Long-term decision making

The Academy Trust has a long-term focus and is a responsible provider of state-funded education for pupils of all abilities. As part of its decision making the ATB considers the likely consequences of any decision in the long-term for all significant matters discussed. The ATB regularly discusses strategic issues and considers the impact on the long-term of the Academy Trust.

Employees

The people employed by the Academy Trust are critical to the success of the academies overall and engagement with staff continues to be a focus with annual employee surveys performed and acted upon. Employees can access high quality training courses provided by GDST.

Business relationships

Maintaining good relationships with suppliers remains critical to the Academy Trust's own performance and reputation. Performance of key suppliers is monitored. Robust processes are in place to ensure settlement of invoices occurs within terms in place.

Other stakeholders

The Trustees have also identified pupils, parents and the community as key stakeholders. The Academy Trust aims to work with others to create a healthy, safe environment within which all of its pupils can enjoy learning, make progress and achieve high standards. Each pupil is encouraged to participate fully and make a positive contribution to their academy and the wider community and ultimately become successful, motivated, well-adjusted adults who achieve economic well-being.

In addition, the Academy Trust promotes the provision of its facilities for recreation, sports and other leisure time occupation for the benefit of the public/social welfare in the local community.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The financial position of the Academy Trust is detailed in the following pages.

Most of the Academy Trust's income is obtained from the Education and Skills Funding Agency in the form of recurrent and capital grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received during the period and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Capital grants received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Liverpool Local Authority during the year amounted to £3,899k (2023: £3,607). Belvedere secured Condition Improvement Fund funding from ESFA and was awarded capital funding for an expansion

TRUSTEES' REPORT

project from Liverpool City Council. In accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS 102), such grants are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities as restricted income in the fixed asset fund. The restricted fixed asset fund balance is reduced by annual depreciation over the expected useful life of the assets concerned. The depreciation charge for the year on these assets was £1,298k (2023: £1,148k).

Recurrent grants of £15,296k (2023: £13,828k) were received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Local Authorities and other Government bodies. An uplift in GAG funding level as well as growing pupil numbers generated the increase in income. Expenditure covered by these grants amounted to £15,048k (2023: £13,757k) due to rising staff costs and building running costs. Such grants and expenditure are shown in the restricted general fund in the Statement of Financial Activities. The primary cost incurred were direct staff costs of £10,858k (2023: £9,836k) which enabled the Academy Trust in delivering an outstanding education to all pupils.

Unrestricted income and expenditure in the period amounted to £1,254k (2023: £1,050k) and £1,082k (2023: £1,041k) respectively. The catering revenue stream has been impacted by higher food and staff costs.

The in-year surplus (excluding the pension reserve movement) amounted to £358k (2023: £378k). The Academy Trust continued to receive the Recovery Premium grant to 31 August 2024 though this has now ceased and benefitted significantly from the additional MSAG grant that came into effect from 1 April 2023. Unrestricted income usually generates a significant surplus however rising food and wage costs have impacted the contribution from the catering revenue stream. The coach has been discontinued from September 2024 as it was loss-making due to reducing number of users.

Free Reserves (total of restricted general funds (excluding the defined benefit pension liability) and unrestricted general funds) at the end of the period amounted to £1,277k (2023: £1,224k). The restricted general fund (excluding the defined benefit pension liability) is comprised of unspent GAG funding and is considered to be free reserves as it is permitted to be used for the general running of the trust's main activity of delivering education.

At 31 August 2024 the net book value of fixed assets was £38,575k (2023: £35,716k) and movements in fixed assets are shown in Note 11 to the financial statements. The cost of fixed asset additions in the year amounted to £4,161k (2023: £3,877k). Various building works funded by successful Condition Improvement Fund bids took place, two of which were ongoing at year end and a new building funded by Liverpool City Council was completed in August 2024.

At 31 August 2024, the defined benefit pension liability was £206k (2023: £407k). Movements are shown in Note 23 to the financial statements. The actuarial gain on the pension scheme in the year amounted to £92k (2023: £897k), driven by an increase in the discount rate for scheme liabilities.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Reserves policy

The Academy Trust Board reviews the level of reserves annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of the reserves. It is the trustees' policy to maintain a minimum level of reserves of £650,000 and to build up free reserves and restricted general funds which can be used for future education purposes and essential building maintenance in line with each academy's development plan. The trustees will ensure that the reserves policy continues to conform to the requirements laid down in the Academy Trust Handbook produced by the DfE.

The total funds held at 31 August 2024 was £40,190k (2023: £37,030k). Restricted funds amounted to £38,037k (2023: £35,049k).

Having taken account of the risks to which the Trust is exposed, as detailed on page 16; the trustees consider the current level of general fund reserves (unrestricted general fund and restricted general funds (excluding the defined benefit pension liability)) of £1,277k (2023: £1,224k) to be appropriate considering the majority of income received is in recurring government funding received on a monthly basis.

Section 3.10.1 of the Academy Trust Handbook removed the previous limits on the amount of General Annual Grant that may be carried forward for eligible academies (eligible academies being those that have moved to census based pupil number funding). Both Belvedere and Birkenhead Academy meet this criteria and hence the Academy Trust is not subject to a limit on the amount to GAG that can be carried forward, thus allowing the trustees to ensure that adequate reserves may be built up.

The Restricted Fixed Asset Fund may only be realised by disposing of tangible fixed assets. The balance at 31 August 2024 was £39,120k (2023: £36,213k).

In accordance with FRS 102 it is necessary to charge projected pension scheme deficits to the Restricted General Fund for those pension schemes where the assets and liabilities of the scheme can be separately identified. This has resulted in an increase in restricted reserves of £191,000 in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme and £10,000 from the GDST Defined Benefits Pension Scheme. The deficit position of the pension scheme as calculated from a triennial valuation would generally result in a cash flow effect for the academy trust in the form of an increase or decrease in employers' pension contributions over a period of years. It should be noted that this is an accounting estimate of a long-term liability which has not crystallised and has no immediate impact on the Academy Trust's liquidity.

Investment Policy

The trustees have authorised the use of short term deposit accounts and notice deposit accounts in respect of cash held which is surplus to immediate requirements. The next review is due in March 2025.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The trustees are responsible for the management of the risks to which the Academy Trust is exposed. The ATB Finance, Audit and Risk Assurance committee reviews the Academy Trust's risk management policies and procedures. Trustees are assisted in this task by the Local Governing Bodies, the Senior Leadership Teams of the academies and the specialist Health and Safety and Human Resource advisors at the Girls' Day School Trust (the main sponsor). The Head of Internal Audit at the Girls' Day School Trust also assists the Trustees in assessing risks the Academy Trust may be exposed to.

The Trust's risk management procedures have been reviewed during the year and the trustees are satisfied that the major risks identified have been considered by the trustees and processes have been established to manage those risks where necessary. As a result of their risk assessment, the trustees consider that the key risks facing the Trust continue to be:

- **Long term funding from ESFA not sufficient to support the required Academies offer. Local Authority income for SEND is significantly below the cost of delivering provision for an increasing number of pupils with Educational Healthcare Plans.** The Academies produce three-year budgets which are reviewed in detail by the ATB. Changes in government funding are likely to be publicised well in advance and be accompanied by transitional arrangements. The Academy Trust is able to allocate financial resources to the areas of greatest need.
- **Academies' Sixth Forms undersubscribed in the long term – impacting on results and finances.** Retention of pupils is a key focus for the Academies as well as recruiting externally. Open events are held and regular curriculum reviews take place to ensure the offer remains attractive. Investment in Sixth Form facilities occurs when funds allow.
- **Cyber security vulnerabilities lead to attack, damage or unauthorised access to systems and data.** A Cyber Security Programme is in place to assess existing security standards and to mitigate risks.
- **Staffing – engagement, retention and recruitment difficulties leads to a decline in the quality of teaching and staff morale.** Staff wellbeing is high on the agenda with various staff wellbeing initiatives and robust Return to Work procedures to support staff returning from sickness absence. Succession planning for key posts at SLT and Middle Management level with a strong internal pipeline developed through a strong programme of CPD and investment in people. The Academy Trust maintains a competitive salary structure at least in line with the wider sector to retain and attract staff.
- **The Academy Trust may have pension scheme commitments that it is unable to meet.** The Academy Trust is able to meet its known annual deficit contribution commitments for the foreseeable future.
- **A serious safeguarding episode unfolds or a breach in Health & Safety procedures occurs which causes harm to one or more pupils leading to regulatory action and reputational damage.** Robust policies and procedures are in place to prevent such matters and a safeguarding audit programme is in place.
- **Insufficient cash held to pay suppliers and staff wages.** Forward financial planning of cash flow and liquidity risk management includes maintaining sufficient cash and interest bearing deposits held in flexible accounts.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The strategies employed to manage these risks include the regular review of long term financial forecasts and actuarial valuations of the pension schemes allowing adequate time for appropriate action to be taken.

Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the ATB has a reasonable expectation that the Academy Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, being a period of not less than 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements.

Three year forecasts to 2026/27 have been prepared by each Academy and approved by the ATB following scrutiny by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The forecasts assume that both schools remain at full capacity up to Year 11, the GAG funding rises by 1.35% in 2025/26 and a large increase in energy costs occurs once the current contract ends. Sensitivity analysis focusing on these assumptions has been performed to demonstrate different financial scenarios should the amount of funding decline or there be a decrease in pupil numbers particularly in the Sixth Form which would reduce the level of 16-19 income. The impact of rising, unfunded pay costs has also been considered by modelling the potential impact of increased pay rises. Results indicate that even in a worst-case scenario, in the event there is no uplift in GAG funding or if there was a dip in pupil numbers, the Academy Trust has sufficient cash resources and general fund reserves to continue for at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements.

Suppliers

Maintaining good relationships with suppliers remains critical to the Academy Trust's own performance. Robust processes are in place to ensure settlement of invoices occurs within terms in place.

Fundraising

The Academy Trust held some small fundraising events during the year including non-uniform days and cake sales. The Academy Trust does not work with professional fundraisers or companies who carry out fundraising on its behalf. All fundraising undertaken during the year was monitored by the Trustees. During the year no complaints or issues have arisen as a result of the fundraising events.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting

| UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period | 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 | 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 |
|--|---|---|
| Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh) | 3,048,572 | 3,236,663 |
| Energy consumption break down (kWh) • gas, • electricity | 2,194,370 854,202 | 2,378,911 857,752 |
| Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO ₂ e Gas consumption Owned transport – mini-buses Total scope 1 | 401.35 0.87 402.22 | 434.29 0.54 434.83 |
| Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO ₂ e Purchased electricity | 176.86 | 177.62 |
| Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO ₂ e Business travel in employee owned vehicles | 1.42 | 0.90 |
| Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO ₂ e | 580.50 | 613.35 |
| Intensity ratio Tonnes CO ₂ e per pupil | 0.25 | 0.27 |

Quantification and Reporting Methodology:-

- We have followed the 2019 HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol – Corporate Standard and have used the 2024 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

Intensity measurement

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

Measures taken to improve energy efficiency

We have installed smart meters across all sites and replaced the ageing heating system at one of the academies with a more efficient system. In addition, the electricity purchased by the Academy Trust is renewably sourced.

TRUSTEES' REPORT**PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS**

Following a detailed and extensive review of the academies' cost bases and potential additional areas for income generation, the 2024/25 budgets have been approved by the trustees at an in year surplus of £15,000 for BHSA. The trustees have approved an in-year deficit budget of £91,000 for Belvedere to allow for necessary SLT succession planning.

The main overall objective for both academies is to maintain at least a good OFSTED rating and in order to achieve this, the key priorities for future periods have been identified as follows:

Birkenhead High School Academy

- to provide consistently outstanding teaching across the academy
- to monitor progress throughout the school for all students but particularly for identified cohorts such as vulnerable groups and high achievers
- to achieve outstanding behaviour for learning via a review of the behaviour awards system and ongoing training for staff
- development of student leadership opportunities
- maintain financial and operational efficiency in the current difficult funding climate by exploring every initiative for additional income generation and cost reduction.

Belvedere Academy

- to continue developments in the areas of curriculum, assessment and teaching and learning
- to enhance staff development by ongoing review of staffing structures and the provision of appropriate training programmes
- investment in the development of SLT and succession planning of key roles
- the continued promotion of safeguarding and wellbeing for both students and staff
- the management and development of the academy's resources in terms of ensuring financial stability, making the most effective use of the school estate and formulation of a long term ICT strategy.

The success and progress of these objectives will be monitored by the Trustees through review of external reports, internal reports produced by each academy's leadership teams and also financial reports produced by the Finance Directors.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

ENGAGEMENT WITH EMPLOYEES (INCLUDING DISABLED PERSONS)

Employees have been consulted on issues of concern to them by means of regular communication and staff meetings and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by management. An annual employee survey is undertaken to capture feedback from staff in all roles, the results are reported to the ATB and each academy forms an action plan based on the staff voice.

The Academy Trust has implemented a number of detailed policies in relation to all aspects of personnel matters including:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

The trustees recognise that equal opportunities should be an integral part of good practice within the workplace. The Academy Trust aims to establish equal opportunities in all areas of its activities including creating a working environment in which the contribution and needs of all people are fully valued.

In accordance with the Academy Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy, the Academy Trust has long established fair employment practices in the recruitment, selection, retention and training of disabled staff.

AUDITORS

Statement as to disclosure of information to Auditors

The trustees confirm that so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Academy Trust's auditors are unaware. They have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Academy Trust's auditors are aware of that information.

The report of the Trustees, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by the Trustees, as the company directors on 9 December 2024 and signed on the board's behalf by:



Gary Stewart
Trustee, Chair of Finance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

TRUSTEES' REPORT

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of Responsibility

The trustees acknowledge that they have overall responsibility for ensuring that the 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 trustees have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook and competency framework for governance.

The Academy Trust Board ("ATB") has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Principals and Accounting Officer for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and are in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreements between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control to the ATB.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The Academy Trust Board has formally met three times during the year and the Finance, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has met four times. Attendance during the year at meetings was as follows:

| Academy Trust Board Trustee | Meetings attended | Out of a possible |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Kathy Anstey | 3 | 3 |
| Jonathan Davis (resigned 31 July 2024) | 3 | 3 |
| Hilary Ann Ewing | 3 | 3 |
| Cheryl Giovannoni (Accounting Officer) | 2 | 3 |
| Judith Simons (resigned 26 June 2024) | 2 | 3 |
| Kieran O'Sullivan (resigned 27 September 2023) | 0 | 0 |
| Gary Stewart | 1 | 3 |
| Rachael Radway (resigned 31 October 2024) | 1 | 3 |
| Jill Galvin (appointed 1 December 2023) | 2 | 2 |
| Sarah Nardone (appointed 8 January 2024) | 2 | 2 |
| Victoria Walshaw (appointed 8 January) | 2 | 2 |
| Sharon Wiesemann (appointed 8 January 2024) | 2 | 2 |
| Georgina Paton (appointed 11 March 2024) | 1 | 2 |
| Jeremy King (appointed 19 June 2024) | 1 | 1 |
| Farid Alexander Ghattas (appointed 6 November 2024) | 0 | 0 |

TRUSTEES' REPORT

| ATB Finance, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Member | Meetings attended | Out of a possible |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Jonathan Davis (resigned 31 July 2024) | 4 | 4 |
| Gary Stewart (Chair) | 4 | 4 |
| Rachael Radway | 4 | 4 |
| Georgina Paton (from 11 March 2024) | 1 | 1 |
| Farid Alexander Ghattas (appointed 6 November 2024) | 0 | 0 |

Two detailed governance reviews have been carried out in the past five years. The first review, finalised in late 2019, was entirely focused on the GDST Academy Trust and delivered a number of recommendations, including about the composition of the board and the content and structure of meetings. Adjustments were made to the governance arrangements in light of the findings identified by the external consultant engaged to perform this piece of work; greater use is made of the Finance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee therefore freeing up ATB meetings for other strategic considerations. In 2020 a separate review was carried out in relation to governance at the GDST as part of the Trust's internal audit plan for that year. Although findings were predominantly made in the context of the governance framework for the Trust's fee-charging schools, it was highlighted that there should be a greater degree of information exchanged between the wider GDST and the Academy Trust – to ensure that examples of best practice in the running of schools was shared across the two environments. This has resulted in greater collaboration between the two organisations, specifically at operational level, generating efficiencies in working practices for the Academy Trust. The next governance review is scheduled to take place in 2025.

Conflicts of Interest

The Academy Trust maintains an up-to-date register of interests to record the interests of Trustees, Governors and senior staff members. The Academy Trust operates a Conflicts of Interests policy to formally set out the process followed when a Conflict is identified. In the case of the provision of services from the Sponsor at cost, Trustees connected to the Sponsor are excluded from discussions and the decision-making process to eliminate the conflict of interests.

Review of Value for Money

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

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

In the current funding climate it is essential that both academies continually review their cost bases and potential areas for additional income generation. This exercise enabled both

TRUSTEES' REPORT

academies to set prudent budgets for the 2024/25 financial year and the key strategies used to achieve this included:-

- Re-structuring of support staff roles and responsibilities.
- Review of the curriculum offer, particularly at Sixth Form, to improve retention and recruitment and to reduce teaching staff requirements.
- Reducing teachers' non-contact time.

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 controls 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 controls has been in place in the Academy Trust for the year ended 31 August 2024 and up to the date of the approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The trustees have 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 trustees are of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Academy Trust's significant risks and that this system has been in place for the year ended 31 August 2024 and up to the date of the approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is reviewed regularly by the trustees and at every Finance, Audit & Risk Assurance committee meeting.

Risk registers are maintained at both Academy Trust level and at individual academy level. Academy risk registers are reviewed on a termly basis by the LGBs and the ATB. The Academy Trust risk register is reviewed annually by the ATB.

The Risk and Control Framework

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

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the trustees;
- regular reviews by the trustees and the LGBs of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- setting targets and key performance indicators to measure financial and other performance;

TRUSTEES' REPORT

- clearly defined purchasing (revenue purchase or capital investment) guidelines;
- detailed terms of reference for all committees;
- formal agendas for the ATB, ATB Finance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee and LGB meetings (the minutes of the LGB meetings are reviewed by the ATB);
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- formal written policies;
- policies and procedures required by law to protect the vulnerable;
- identification and management of risks.

The ATB Finance, Audit and Risk Assurance Sub-Committee is responsible for reviewing the Academy Trust's risk management policies and procedures, including those relating to internal financial controls and the internal audit work planned to address those risks. The Academy Trust has appointed the internal auditor of the Girls' Day School Trust to carry out a programme of internal checks and the Sub-Committee directs the work of the internal auditor to those areas of greatest risk. On an annual basis, the internal auditor reports to the ATB (through the Finance, Audit and Risk Assurance Sub-Committee) on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the ATB's financial responsibilities. The internal audit carried out in the year ended 31 August 2024 was delivered as planned and did not identify any material control issues.

Review of Effectiveness

The Academy Trust consists of two academies. The values and aspirations for the academies are wholly aligned with those for the rest of the GDST network of schools. The Accounting Officer, who is also Chief Executive Officer of the GDST, takes senior executive responsibility for the academies, including line management of the respective principals.

The Accounting 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 ATB Finance, Audit and Risk Assurance Sub-Committee and internal audit function;
- 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 ATB Finance, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and a plan to address any weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the systems is in place.

GDST Academy Trust

Annual Report and Financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

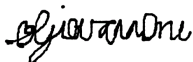
TRUSTEES' REPORT

9/12/2024

Approved by order of the trustees on and signed on their behalf
by:



Gary Stewart
Trustee, Chair of Finance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee



Cheryl Giovannoni
Accounting Officer


TRUSTEES' REPORT

STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

As Accounting Officer of GDST Academy Trust, I have considered my responsibility to notify the Academy Trust Board and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with ESFA terms and conditions of funding, including for estates safety and management, under the funding agreements in place between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

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



Cheryl Giovannoni
Accounting Officer
Date: 9/12/2024

TRUSTEES' REPORT

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 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.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

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.

9/12/2024

Approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on
and signed on their behalf by:



Gary Stewart
Trustee, Chair of Finance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee



Independent auditor's report to the trustees of GDST Academy Trust

Independent auditor's report to the trustees of GDST Academy Trust

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of GDST Academy Trust (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 August 2024, which comprise the Statement of financial activities (including the income and expenditure account), the Balance sheet, the Statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), 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 (Charities SORP (FRS 102) 2019 Edition), the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education & Skills Funding Agency, the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 August 2024 and of the charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006; and
- have been prepared in accordance with 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 (Charities SORP (FRS 102) 2019 Edition) and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024.

Basis for opinion

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



Independent auditor's report to the trustees of GDST Academy Trust

basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We are responsible for concluding 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 charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify the auditor's opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.

In our evaluation of the trustees' conclusions, we considered the inherent risks associated with the charitable company's business model including effects arising from macro-economic uncertainties such as the cost of living crisis, we assessed and challenged the reasonableness of estimates made by the trustees and the related disclosures and analysed how those risks might affect the charitable company's financial resources or ability to continue operations over the going concern period.

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 charitable company'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 and Financial Statements, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report and Financial Statements. 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements 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.



Independent auditor's report to the trustees of GDST Academy Trust

Opinions 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 strategic report and the trustees' report, prepared for the purposes of company law, included in the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the trustees' report included within Annual Report and Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matter on which we are required to report under the Companies Act 2006

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the trustees' report, included in the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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 the trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on pages 28 and 29, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company'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 charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.



Independent auditor's report to the trustees of GDST Academy Trust

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's 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. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the charitable company and the sector in which it operates. We determined that the following laws and regulations were most significant: the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024, the Academy Trust Handbook 2024, The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, Academies Act 2010, Data protection Act 2018 and The Education Act 2002;
- We understood how the charitable company is complying with these legal and regulatory frameworks by making inquiries of management and those charged with governance. We enquired of management and those charged with governance whether there were any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations, or whether they had any knowledge of actual or suspected fraud. We corroborated the results of our enquiries through our review of board minutes and through our legal and professional expenses review;
- We assessed the susceptibility of the charitable company's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur and the risk of material override of controls. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:
 - Identifying and assessing the design effectiveness of certain controls management has in place to prevent and detect fraud
 - Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting policies
 - Identifying and testing journal entries, with a focus on manual postings, journals that directly impacted on the surplus reported in the statement of financial activities and journal entries posted in the closing and accounts preparation period
 - Identifying and testing related party transactions
 - Inspecting the board and other committee minutes
 - Assessing the extent of compliance with the relevant laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement item



Independent auditor's report to the trustees of GDST Academy Trust

- These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error and detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it;
- Assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included consideration of the engagement team's.
 - understanding of, and practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity through appropriate training and participation
 - knowledge of the education sector
 - understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to the charitable company including:
 - the provisions of the applicable legislation
 - guidance issued by the ESFA and Charities Commission.
- The team communications in respect of potential non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations, including the potential for fraud in revenue through manipulation of income and management override of controls; and
- In assessing the potential risks of material misstatement, we obtained an understanding of:
 - the charitable company's operations, including the nature of its income and expenditure and its services and of its objectives and strategies to understand the classes of transactions, account balances, expected financial statement disclosures and business risks that may result in risks of material misstatement.
 - the charitable company's control environment, including: the policies and procedures implemented by the charitable company to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework and relevant laws and regulations.
 - the policies and procedures implemented by the charitable company to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework and relevant laws and regulations
 - the adequacy of procedures for authorisation of transactions and review of management accounts
 - procedures to ensure that possible breaches of laws and regulations are appropriately resolved.

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



Independent auditor's report to the trustees of GDST Academy Trust

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's trustees, 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 charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Dean".

Stephen Dean, BA(Hons) FCA
Senior Statutory Auditor
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP
Statutory Auditor, Chartered Accountants
London

Date: 9/12/2024



Independent reporting accountant's assurance report on Regularity to GDST Academy Trust and the Education & Skills Funding Agency

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 9 September 2024 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Academy Trusts, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by GDST Academy Trust during the period 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.

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

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of GDST Academy Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated July 2014 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 extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Academy Trusts. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 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.

Approach

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

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

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

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

The work undertaken to draw our conclusion includes:

- an assessment of the risk of material irregularity and impropriety across GDST Academy Trust's activities;
- evaluation of the processes and controls established and maintained in respect of regularity, propriety and compliance of the use of public funds through observation and testing of the arrangements in place and enquiry of the Accounting Officer;
- consideration and corroboration of the evidence supporting the Accounting Officer's statement on regularity, propriety and compliance; and
- testing a sample of income and expenditure transactions, increasing the extent of this testing for those areas identified as high risk.



Independent reporting accountant's assurance report on Regularity to GDST Academy Trust and the Education & Skills Funding Agency

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 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.

Use of our report

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

Grant Thornton UK LLP

Reporting Accountant

Grant Thornton UK LLP
Chartered Accountants
London

Date: 9/12/2024

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

| | Note | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted general funds £'000 | Restricted fixed asset funds £'000 | 2024 Total £'000 | 2023 Total £'000 |
|--|------|--------------------------------|---|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| Income | | | | | | |
| Donations and capital grants | 2 | 78 | - | 3,899 | 3,977 | 3,672 |
| Other trading activities | 3 | 1,011 | - | - | 1,011 | 910 |
| Investment income | 4 | 58 | - | - | 58 | 33 |
| Income from charitable activities | | | | | | |
| Funding for the academies' educational operations | 5 | 107 | 15,343 | - | 15,450 | 14,008 |
| Total incoming resources | | 1,254 | 15,343 | 3,899 | 20,496 | 18,623 |
| Expenditure on: | | | | | | |
| Raising funds | 6 | 1,082 | - | - | 1,082 | 1,041 |
| Charitable activities: | | | | | | |
| Academies' educational operations | 7 | - | 15,048 | 1,298 | 16,346 | 14,841 |
| Total | | 1,082 | 15,048 | 1,298 | 17,428 | 15,882 |
| Net income | | 172 | 295 | 2,601 | 3,068 | 2,741 |
| Transfers between funds | 14 | - | (306) | 306 | - | - |
| Other recognised gains: | | | | | | |
| Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes | 23 | - | 92 | - | 92 | 897 |
| Net movement in funds | | 172 | 81 | 2,907 | 3,160 | 3,638 |
| Reconciliation of funds | | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | 14 | 1,981 | (1,164) | 36,213 | 37,030 | 33,392 |
| Total funds carried forward | | 2,153 | (1,083) | 39,120 | 40,190 | 37,030 |

All of the Academy Trust's activities derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024

| | Note | 2024 £'000 | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|--|------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Fixed assets | | | | | |
| Tangible assets | 11 | | <u>38,575</u> | | <u>35,716</u> |
| Current assets | | | | | |
| Debtors | 12 | 1,525 | | 1,772 | |
| Cash at bank | | <u>3,268</u> | | <u>3,045</u> | |
| | | 4,793 | | 4,817 | |
| Liabilities | | | | | |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 13 | <u>(2,972)</u> | | <u>(3,096)</u> | |
| Net current assets | | | <u>1,821</u> | | <u>1,721</u> |
| Total assets less current liabilities | | | 40,396 | | 37,437 |
| Defined benefit pension scheme liability | 23 | | <u>(206)</u> | | <u>(407)</u> |
| Total net assets | | | <u>40,190</u> | | <u>37,030</u> |
| Funds of the Academy Trust | | | | | |
| Restricted funds: | | | | | |
| Fixed asset funds | 14 | 39,120 | | 36,213 | |
| General funds | 14 | (877) | | (757) | |
| Pension reserve | 14 | <u>(206)</u> | | <u>(407)</u> | |
| Total restricted funds | | | 38,037 | | 35,049 |
| Unrestricted funds: | | | | | |
| General funds | 14 | <u>2,153</u> | | <u>1,981</u> | |
| Total unrestricted funds | | | <u>2,153</u> | | <u>1,981</u> |
| Total funds | | | <u>40,190</u> | | <u>37,030</u> |

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on xxxx
 December 2024 and are signed on their behalf, by: 9/12/2024



Gary Stewart
**Trustee, Chair of Finance, Audit & Risk
 Assurance Committee**

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

| | Note | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Cash flows from operating activities | | | |
| Net cash provided by operating activities | 18 | 423 | 262 |
| Cash flows used in investing activities | 19 | (200) | (237) |
| Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period | | <u>223</u> | <u>25</u> |
| Cash and cash equivalents at 1 September 2023 | | <u>3,045</u> | <u>3,020</u> |
| Cash and cash equivalents at 31 August 2024 | 20 | <u>3,268</u> | <u>3,045</u> |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee (No. 06000347) incorporated in England and Wales and is an exempt charity. The registered office is 10 Bressenden Place, London, SW1E 5DH. The principal objective of the Academy Trust is to advance education for the public benefit, by establishing, maintaining, operating and developing schools, including but not limited to academies.

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

Basis of preparation

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

The financial statements are presented in Sterling (£).

Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the ATB has a reasonable expectation that the Academy Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, being a period of not less than 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements.

Three year forecasts to 2026/27 have been prepared by each Academy and approved by the ATB following scrutiny by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The forecasts assume that both schools remain at full capacity up to Year 11, the GAG funding rises by 1.35% in 2025/26 and a large increase in energy costs occurs once the current contract ends. Sensitivity analysis focusing on these assumptions has been performed to demonstrate different financial scenarios should the amount of funding decline or there be a decrease in pupil numbers particularly in the Sixth Form which would reduce the level of 16-19 income. The impact of rising, unfunded pay costs has also been considered by modelling the potential impact of increased pay rises. Results indicate that even in a worst-case scenario, in the event there is no uplift in GAG funding or if there was a dip in pupil numbers, the Academy Trust has sufficient cash resources and general fund reserves to continue for at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements.

Income

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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 and there is not unconditional entitlement to the income, 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.

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

Sponsorship income

The value of sponsorship provided to the Academy Trust is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which it is receivable, (where there are no performance related conditions) where the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations

Donations are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis (where there are no performance related conditions) where the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably.

Other Income

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent that the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

Gifts in kind

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

Where the donated good is a fixed asset, it is measured at fair value, unless it is impractical to measure this reliably, in which case the cost of the item to the donor should be used. The gain is recognised as income from donations and a corresponding

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

amount is included in the appropriate fixed asset category and depreciated over the useful economic life in accordance with the Academy's accounting policies.

Interest receivable

Interest receivable is included within the statement of financial activities on a receivable basis.

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.

- **Expenditure on Raising Funds**
This includes all expenditure incurred by the Academy Trust to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities events and non-charitable trading.
- **Charitable Activities**
These are costs incurred on the Academy Trust’s educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the Academy Trust apportioned to charitable activities.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets acquired since the Academy Trust was established are included in the accounts at cost. All assets costing more than £2,000 and with an expected useful life exceeding one year are capitalised. Fixed assets donated by third parties are recognised as income at their fair value in the period in which the Academy Trust has entitlement to the incoming resources, where the benefit to the Academy Trust can be reliably measured and where any performance related conditions have been fully met.

Depreciation

Depreciation is charged on a straight line basis beginning in the year in which the asset is brought into use at the following annual rates:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Leasehold buildings and improvements | 2%-5% p.a. |
| Leasehold building refurbishments | 10% p.a. |
| Furniture, fittings and equipment | 25% p.a. |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| Computer equipment | 25% p.a. |
| Motor vehicles | 25% p.a. |

Where fixed assets have been acquired with the aid of specific grants or donations, they are included in the balance sheet at cost or valuation and are depreciated over their expected useful economic life. The related grants are credited to a restricted fixed asset fund (in the Statement of Financial Activities and carried forward in the balance sheet). The depreciation on such assets is charged in the Statement of Financial Activities over the expected useful economic life of the related asset on a basis consistent with the depreciation policy.

Assets in the course of construction are included at cost. Depreciation on these assets is not charged until they are brought into use. Fixed assets donated by third parties are recognised as income at their fair value in the period in which the Academy Trust has entitlement to the incoming resources, where the benefit to the Academy Trust can be reliably measured and where any performance related conditions have been fully met.

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

Liabilities

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

Provisions

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

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

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Academy Trust is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 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.

Leased assets

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Agency arrangements

The Academy Trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 Bursary funds from ESFA. Payments received from ESFA and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the Statement of Financial Activities as the Academy Trust does not have control over the charitable application of the funds. The funds received and paid and any balances held are disclosed in note 27.

Pensions

Academy Trust staff are members of three pension schemes, all of which are defined benefit schemes. More details of the schemes are given in note 23.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the academy trust in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by the Government Actuary on the basis of quadrennial valuations using a prospective unit credit method. As stated in note 23, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution scheme for accounting purposes and the contributions recognised in the period to which they relate.

The LGPS and the GDST Defined Benefit Scheme are funded schemes 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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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.

Fund Accounting

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

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

Restricted general funds comprise all other restricted funds received with restrictions imposed by the funder/donor and include grants from the ESFA/DfE.

Financial instruments

The Academy Trust only holds basic financial statements as defined in FRS102. The financial assets and financial liabilities of the academy trust and their measurement basis are as follows:

Financial assets – trade and other debtors are basic financial statements and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 12. Prepayments are not financial instruments. Amounts due to Girl's Day School Trust are held at face value less any impairment.

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

Financial liabilities – trade creditors and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 13. 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. Amounts due to Girl's Day School Trust are held at face value less any impairment.

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. There are no significant areas of judgement.

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme and GDST pension scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 23, 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.

As explained further within the tangible fixed assets policy, assets held by the Academy Trust are depreciated from the date of acquisition based on their useful economic life, so as to write off the cost of the asset less any residual value (if any). Judgement is required to assess the length of this life, and this is evaluated based on past experience, asset classification and condition reviews. Depreciation rates for classes of assets are reviewed periodically to ensure they remain appropriate with reference to internal and external factors.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2 DONATIONS AND CAPITAL GRANTS

| | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted funds £'000 | 2024 Total £'000 | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted Funds £'000 | 2023 Total £'000 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Other capital donation | - | 2,877 | 2,877 | - | 2,131 | 2,131 |
| ESFA capital grant | - | 1,022 | 1,022 | - | 1,476 | 1,476 |
| Sponsor revenue donation | 75 | - | 75 | 55 | - | 55 |
| Other donations | 3 | - | 3 | 8 | 2 | 10 |
| | <u>78</u> | <u>3,899</u> | <u>3,977</u> | <u>63</u> | <u>3,609</u> | <u>3,672</u> |

3 OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

| | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted funds £'000 | 2024 Total £'000 | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted Funds £'000 | 2023 Total £'000 |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Hire of facilities | 230 | - | 230 | 184 | - | 184 |
| Catering income | 656 | - | 656 | 563 | - | 563 |
| Sundry income | 24 | - | 24 | 26 | - | 26 |
| Transport scheme income | 101 | - | 101 | 137 | - | 137 |
| | <u>1,011</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>1,011</u> | <u>910</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>910</u> |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

4 INVESTMENT INCOME

| | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted funds £'000 | 2024 Total £'000 | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted Funds £'000 | 2023 Total £'000 |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Short term deposits | 58 | - | 58 | 33 | - | 33 |

5 FUNDING FOR THE ACADEMY TRUST'S EDUCATIONAL OPERATIONS

| | Unrestricted Funds £'000 | Restricted funds £'000 | 2024 Total £'000 | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted Funds £'000 | 2023 Total £'000 |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| DfE/EFA revenue grants | | | | | | |
| General Annual Grant (GAG) | - | 10,886 | 10,886 | - | 9,835 | 9,835 |
| 16-19 Core funding | - | 2,170 | 2,170 | - | 2,123 | 2,123 |
| Pupil premium | - | 602 | 602 | - | 561 | 561 |
| UIFSM | - | 67 | 67 | - | 63 | 63 |
| Other DfE grants | - | 910 | 910 | - | 709 | 709 |
| | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | 14,635 | 14,635 | - | 13,291 | 13,291 |
| Other Government grants | | | | | | |
| Other Government grants | - | 661 | 661 | - | 537 | 537 |
| | - | 661 | 661 | - | 537 | 537 |
| COVID-19 Additional Funding (DfE/ESFA) | | | | | | |
| Tuition funding | - | 23 | 23 | - | 17 | 17 |
| | - | 23 | 23 | - | 17 | 17 |
| Other income from the Academy Trust's educational operations | 107 | 24 | 131 | 44 | 119 | 163 |
| | 107 | 24 | 131 | 44 | 119 | 163 |
| | 107 | 15,343 | 15,450 | 44 | 13,964 | 14,008 |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

6 EXPENDITURE

| | Non pay expenditure | | | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|---------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Staff costs | Premises | Other | Total | Total |
| | £'000 | £'000 | Costs £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Costs of activities for generating funds | 426 | - | 656 | 1,082 | 1,041 |
| | 426 | - | 656 | 1,082 | 1,041 |
| Academy's educational operations | | | | | |
| Direct costs | 10,857 | 771 | 822 | 12,450 | 11,148 |
| Allocated support costs | 1,929 | 1,424 | 543 | 3,896 | 3,693 |
| | 12,786 | 2,195 | 1,365 | 16,346 | 14,841 |
| | 13,212 | 2,195 | 2,021 | 17,428 | 15,882 |

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Depreciation | 1,298 | 1,085 |
| Operating lease rentals | 28 | 29 |
| Fees payable to auditor | | |
| - Audit | 28 | 32 |
| - Other services | 6 | 4 |

7 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | 2024 Total | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | 2023 Total |
|--|--------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Teaching and educational support staff costs | - | 10,858 | 10,858 | - | 9,836 | 9,836 |
| Depreciation | - | 771 | 771 | - | 638 | 638 |
| Educational supplies | - | 537 | 537 | - | 413 | 413 |
| Examination fees | - | 233 | 233 | - | 197 | 197 |
| Staff development | - | 30 | 30 | - | 25 | 25 |
| Other direct costs | - | 22 | 22 | - | 39 | 39 |
| Total | - | 12,451 | 12,451 | - | 11,148 | 11,148 |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

| | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted funds £'000 | 2024 Total £'000 | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted funds £'000 | 2023 Total £'000 |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Analysis of support costs | | | | | | |
| Support staff costs | - | 1,928 | 1,928 | - | 1,739 | 1,739 |
| Depreciation | - | 527 | 527 | - | 510 | 510 |
| Technology costs | - | 142 | 142 | - | 159 | 159 |
| Premises costs | - | 897 | 897 | - | 863 | 863 |
| Other support costs | - | 368 | 368 | - | 387 | 387 |
| Governance costs | - | 33 | 33 | - | 35 | 35 |
| | - | 3,895 | 3,895 | - | 3,693 | 3,693 |
| Total | - | 16,346 | 16,346 | - | 14,841 | 14,841 |

8 STAFF COSTS

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| a. Staff costs | | |
| Wages and salaries | 9,797 | 8,982 |
| Social security costs | 968 | 867 |
| Other pension costs | 2,129 | 1,960 |
| | 12,894 | 11,809 |
| Supply teacher costs | 313 | 171 |
| | 13,207 | 11,980 |

b. Non-statutory/non-contractual staff severance payments

Included in staff restructuring costs are non-statutory/non contractual severance payments totalling £nil (2023: £nil).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

c. Staff numbers

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

| | 2024 Number | 2023 Number |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Charitable activities | | |
| Teachers | 140 | 141 |
| Administration and support | 149 | 143 |
| Management | 14 | 14 |
| | <u>303</u> | <u>298</u> |

d. Higher paid staff

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

| | 2024 Number | 2023 Number |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| £60,001 - £70,000 | 5 | 5 |
| £70,001 - £80,000 | 3 | 1 |
| £80,001 - £90,000 | 2 | 2 |
| £110,001 - £120,000 | - | 1 |
| £120,001 - £130,000 | 1 | - |
| £130,001 - £140,000 | 1 | 1 |
| £140,001 - £150,000 | - | - |
| | <u></u> | <u></u> |

e. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Academy Trust comprise the trustees and the senior management teams. The senior management teams comprise the Principals, Vice Principals, Assistant Vice Principals, the Finance Directors and Administrative Manager. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension and National Insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy Trust was £1,466,007 (2023: £1,368,249).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

9 RELATED PARTY EXPENSES, TRUSTEES' AND LOCAL GOVERNORS' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

The Principals and staff Local Governors only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of Principal and staff and not in respect of their services as Local Governors. The Trustees and Local Governors did not receive any payments from the Academy Trust in respect of their roles as Trustees and Local Governors. The Principals' remuneration is shown below. The staff Local Governors are not Trustees and hence their remuneration is not disclosed.

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Principal – Belvedere Academy | 129 | 120 |
| Principal – Birkenhead Academy | 135 | 131 |

The employer’s pension contributions paid in the year were:-

- Principal – Belvedere Academy £31,684 (2023: £26,059)
- Principal – Birkenhead Academy £37,638 (2023: £27,618)

The Trustees and Local Governors did not receive any payment or reimbursed expenses from the Academy Trust during the year (2023: £Nil).

Related party transactions involving the Trustees are set out in note 24 and 25.

10 TRUSTEES', LOCAL GOVERNORS' AND OFFICERS' INSURANCE

In accordance with normal commercial practice the Academy Trust has purchased insurances to protect Trustees, Governors and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Academy Trust business. The insurance provides cover up to £2,000,000 on any one claim and the cost for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £1,100 (2023: £1,100). The cost of this insurance is included in the total insurance cost.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

11 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

| | Leasehold improvements £'000 | Long leasehold buildings £'000 | Leasehold refurbishments £'000 | Assets under construction £'000 | Educational furniture and equipment £'000 | Motor vehicles £'000 | ICT equipment £'000 | Total £'000 |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Cost | | | | | | | | |
| At 1 September 2023 | 28,544 | 13,530 | 2,924 | 626 | 1,030 | 12 | 1,615 | 48,281 |
| Additions | 820 | - | 379 | 2,802 | 75 | - | 85 | 4,161 |
| Transfers | 3,428 | - | - | (3,428) | - | - | - | - |
| Disposals | - | - | (4) | - | - | - | (488) | (492) |
| At 31 August 2024 | <u>32,792</u> | <u>13,530</u> | <u>3,299</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>1,105</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>1,212</u> | <u>51,950</u> |
| Depreciation | | | | | | | | |
| At 1 September 2023 | 5,421 | 4,238 | 570 | - | 906 | 12 | 1,418 | 12,565 |
| Provided in the year | 600 | 271 | 276 | - | 54 | - | 97 | 1,298 |
| Disposals | - | - | - | - | - | - | (488) | (488) |
| At 31 August 2024 | <u>6,021</u> | <u>4,509</u> | <u>846</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>960</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>1,027</u> | <u>13,375</u> |
| Net book value | | | | | | | | |
| At 31 August 2024 | <u>26,771</u> | <u>9,021</u> | <u>2,453</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>145</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>185</u> | <u>38,575</u> |
| At 31 August 2023 | <u>23,123</u> | <u>9,292</u> | <u>2,354</u> | <u>626</u> | <u>124</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>197</u> | <u>35,716</u> |

The Academy Trust's transactions relating to assets under construction include construction costs for a new classroom block at The Belvedere Academy. This work was completed in August 2024 and was funded by a grant from Liverpool City Council in connection with the increase in the pupil admission number.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

12 DEBTORS

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| ESFA capital grants receivable | - | 164 |
| ESFA other grants receivable | 49 | 44 |
| Amount due from The Girls' Day School Trust | - | 1 |
| VAT recoverable | 501 | 671 |
| Trade debtors | 18 | 62 |
| Other debtors | 21 | 23 |
| Prepayments and accrued income | 936 | 807 |
| | 1,525 | 1,772 |

13 CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Trade creditors | 687 | 659 |
| Accruals and deferred income | 963 | 1,238 |
| Taxation and social security | 218 | 205 |
| Amounts due to The Girls' Day School Trust | 647 | 557 |
| Other creditors | 457 | 437 |
| | 2,972 | 3,096 |

DEFERRED INCOME

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Deferred income at 1 September 2023 | 411 | 378 |
| Resources deferred in the year | 429 | 406 |
| Amounts released from previous years | (410) | (373) |
| Deferred income at 31 August 2024 | 430 | 411 |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DEFERRED INCOME (continued)

At the balance sheet date the Academy Trust was holding funds received in advance relating to:

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Deferred ESFA capital grants | 233 | 212 |
| Deferred ESFA Revenue grants | 118 | 78 |
| Deferred grants for educational projects | 54 | 86 |
| Funds received in advance for locker hire pupil lunches | 12 | 16 |
| Sundry | 13 | 19 |
| | 430 | 411 |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

14 FUNDS

| | Balance at 1 September 2023 | Income | Expenditure | Gains, losses and transfers | Balance at 31 August 2024 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Restricted general funds | | | | | |
| General Annual Grant | (767) | 13,057 | (12,871) | (306) | (887) |
| Other ESFA grants | - | 1,602 | (1,602) | - | - |
| LEA and other grants | - | 660 | (660) | - | - |
| Other restricted | 10 | 24 | (24) | - | 10 |
| Pensions reserve | (407) | - | 109 | 92 | (206) |
| | <u>(1,164)</u> | <u>15,343</u> | <u>(15,048)</u> | <u>(214)</u> | <u>(1,083)</u> |
| Restricted fixed asset funds | | | | | |
| DfE/ESFA capital grants | 18,436 | 1,022 | (781) | - | 18,677 |
| Private sector capital sponsorship | 1,137 | 41 | (2) | - | 1,176 |
| Capital expenditure from GAG | 586 | - | (55) | 306 | 837 |
| Local Authority capital grants | 6,480 | 2,836 | (168) | - | 9,148 |
| Private sector long leasehold grant | 9,480 | - | (290) | - | 9,190 |
| Other government grants | 94 | - | (2) | - | 92 |
| | <u>36,213</u> | <u>3,899</u> | <u>(1,298)</u> | <u>306</u> | <u>39,120</u> |
| Total restricted funds | <u>35,049</u> | <u>19,242</u> | <u>(16,346)</u> | <u>92</u> | <u>38,037</u> |
| Unrestricted funds | <u>1,981</u> | <u>1,254</u> | <u>(1,082)</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>2,153</u> |
| Total funds | <u><u>37,030</u></u> | <u><u>20,496</u></u> | <u><u>(17,428)</u></u> | <u><u>92</u></u> | <u><u>40,190</u></u> |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FUNDS (continued)

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

| | Balance at 1 September 2022 | Income | Expenditure | Gains, losses and transfers | Balance at 31 August 2023 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Restricted general funds | | | | | |
| General Annual Grant | (829) | 11,958 | (11,592) | (304) | (767) |
| LEA and other grants | - | 537 | (537) | - | - |
| Other ESFA grants | - | 1,350 | (1,350) | - | - |
| Other restricted | 7 | (121) | (118) | - | 10 |
| Pensions reserve | (1,208) | - | (96) | 897 | (407) |
| | (2,030) | 13,966 | (13,693) | 593 | (1,164) |
| Restricted fixed asset funds | | | | | |
| DfE/ESFA capital grants | 17,644 | 1,476 | (684) | - | 18,436 |
| Private sector capital sponsorship | 1,114 | 33 | (10) | - | 1,137 |
| Capital expenditure from GAG | 316 | - | (34) | 304 | 586 |
| Local Authority capital grants | 4,504 | 2,098 | (122) | - | 6,480 |
| Private sector long leasehold grant | 9,776 | - | (296) | - | 9,480 |
| Other government grants | 96 | - | (2) | - | 94 |
| | 33,450 | 3,607 | (1,148) | 304 | 36,213 |
| Total restricted funds | 31,420 | 17,573 | (14,841) | 897 | 35,049 |
| Unrestricted funds | 1,972 | 1,050 | (1,041) | - | 1,981 |
| Total funds | 33,392 | 18,623 | (15,882) | 897 | 37,030 |

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

The General Annual Grant must be used for the normal running costs of the academies within the Academy Trust. Section 3.10.1 of the Academy Trust Handbook removed the previous limits on the amount of General Annual Grant that may be carried forward for eligible academies (eligible academies being those that have moved to census based pupil

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

number funding). Both Belvedere and Birkenhead Academy meet this criteria, hence the Academy Trust is not subject to a limit on the amount to GAG that can be carried forward.

Local Authority grants relate to local authority funding for the provision of education by the academies within the Academy Trust.

The ESFA capital grants are provided by the Government for specific capital purposes.

Sponsorship funds are those funds provided by the academies' sponsors for specific capital projects. The long leasehold grants relate to the capitalisation of the 99 year leases of the properties at Belvedere Road and Devonshire Place which were granted to the Academy Trust by The Girls' Day School Trust.

The transfer from the restricted general fund to the restricted fixed asset fund of £306,000 (2023: £304,000) represents the total capital expenditure funded from the General Annual Grant during the year.

Analysis of academies by fund balance

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were allocated as follows:

| | Total £'000 |
|---|------------------------|
| Belvedere Academy | 793 |
| Birkenhead Academy | 483 |
| Central Services | - |
| Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve | <u>1,276</u> |
| Restricted fixed asset funds | 39,120 |
| Pension reserve | (206) |
| Total funds | <u><u>40,190</u></u> |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FUNDS (continued)

Analysis of Academies by cost:

| | Teaching and educational support staff costs | Other support staff costs | Educational supplies | Other costs (excluding depreciation) | Total |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Belvedere Academy | 5,203 | 1,005 | 413 | 1,263 | 7,884 |
| Birkenhead Academy | 5,654 | 923 | 409 | 1,259 | 8,245 |
| | 10,857 | 1,928 | 822 | 2,522 | 16,129 |

15 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 are represented by:

| | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted general funds £'000 | Restricted fixed asset funds £'000 | Total funds £'000 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| Tangible fixed assets | - | - | 38,575 | 38,575 |
| Current assets | 2,329 | 1,064 | 1,400 | 4,793 |
| Current liabilities | (176) | (1,941) | (855) | (2,972) |
| Pension scheme liability | - | (206) | - | (206) |
| Total | 2,153 | (1,083) | 39,120 | 40,190 |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

15 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS (continued)

Fund balances at 31 August 2023 were represented by:

| | Unrestricted funds £'000 | Restricted general funds £'000 | Restricted fixed asset funds £'000 | Total funds £'000 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| Tangible fixed assets | - | - | 35,716 | 35,716 |
| Current assets | 2,224 | 983 | 1,610 | 4,817 |
| Current liabilities | (243) | (1,740) | (1,113) | (3,096) |
| Pension scheme liability | - | (407) | - | (407) |
| Total | 1,981 | (1,164) | 36,213 | 37,030 |

16 CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Contracted for but not provided in the financial statements | 1,253 | 3,464 |

17 COMMITMENTS UNDER OPERATING LEASES

At 31 August 2024 the total of the Academy Trust's future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases was:

| | 2024 £'000 | Other 2023 £'000 |
|--|---------------|------------------------|
| Amounts due within one year | 3 | 9 |
| Amounts due between one and five years | 7 | 13 |
| Amounts due after five years | - | - |
| | 10 | 22 |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Net income for the year (as per the Statement of Financial Activities) | 3,068 | 2,741 |
| Depreciation (note 11) | 1,298 | 1,085 |
| Loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets | - | 63 |
| Capital grants from DFE and other capital income | (3,899) | (3,607) |
| Decrease/(increase) in debtors | 247 | (662) |
| (Decrease)/increase in creditors | (124) | 579 |
| Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable | (120) | 49 |
| Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost | 11 | 47 |
| Interest received | (58) | (33) |
| Net cash provided by/operating activities | <u>423</u> | <u>262</u> |

19 CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Interest received | 58 | 33 |
| Purchase of tangible fixed assets | (4,161) | (3,877) |
| Capital grants/donations from DFE | 1,022 | 1,476 |
| Capital funding received from sponsors and others | 2,877 | 2,131 |
| Receipts from disposal of tangible fixed assets | 4 | - |
| Net cash used in investing activities | <u>(200)</u> | <u>(237)</u> |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

20 ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Cash at bank and in hand | 3,268 | 3,045 |
| Total cash and cash equivalents | 3,268 | 3,045 |

ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET DEBT

| | At 1 September 2023 £'000 | Cash flows £'000 | New finance leases £'000 | Other non- cash changes £'000 | At 31 August 2024 £'000 |
|-------|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cash | 3,045 | 223 | - | - | 3,268 |
| Total | 3,045 | 223 | - | - | 3,268 |

21 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

There were no contingent liabilities to disclose at 31 August 2024 or 31 August 2023.

22 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.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

23 PENSION COMMITMENTS

Pension and similar obligations

The Academy Trust's employees belong to three principal pension schemes: The Teachers' Pension Scheme England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff; the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non- teaching staff, which is managed by the Merseyside Pension Fund and the GDST Pension Scheme for non-teaching staff. All three schemes are defined benefit schemes.

The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2016 and that of the LGPS 31 March 2022. The GDST Pension Scheme was closed to future benefit accrual from 31 December 2016.

Support Staff Pensions

The deficit of £206k included in the financial statements is made up as follows:

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Local Government Pension Scheme | (142) | (333) |
| GDST Pension Scheme | (64) | (74) |
| | <u>(206)</u> | <u>(407)</u> |

Contributions amounting to £236,823 (2023: £213,255) were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2024 and are included within creditors. Prepaid contributions amounted to £14,953 (2023: £12,437) at 31 August 2024 and are included within debtors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme
Introduction

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. Membership is automatic for 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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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 was 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 period amounted to £1,664,520 (2023: £1,427,194). A copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation is on the [Teachers' Pensions website](#).

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.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The Academy Trust is one of several employing bodies within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The LGPS is a funded defined benefit scheme with the assets held in separate trustee administered funds.

Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, to a guarantee that, in the event of an academy trust closure, outstanding Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013 and on 21 July 2022, the Department for Education reaffirmed its commitment to the guarantee, with a parliamentary minute published on GOV.UK.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

From 1 April 2008, the employees' contribution rate is banded according to the individual employee's pensionable pay. Employees' rate ranged from 5.5% to 9.9% in the year ended 31 August 2024.

The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £674,528 of which employers' contributions totalled £501,174 and employees' contributions totalled £173,354. The amounts for each Academy were:

- Belvedere Employer contributions £204,276 and Employee contributions £81,167.
- Birkenhead Employer contributions £296,898 and Employee contributions £92,187.

The employer's contribution rate comprises two elements:

- The future service funding rate.
- The past service adjustment. This is a stepped amount for each of the three years of the valuation period.

| | Belvedere 2024 | Birkenhead 2024 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Future service funding rate | 17.80% | 19.20% |
| Past service adjustment - 2024 total | £21,936 | £30,491 |

| Principal Actuarial Assumptions | Belvedere At 31 August 2024 % | Belvedere At 31 August 2023 % | Birkenhead At 31 August 2024 % | Birkenhead At 31 August 2023 % |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Rate of increase in salaries | 4.10 | 4.30 | 4.10 | 4.30 |
| Rate of increase for pensions in payment | 2.70 | 2.90 | 2.70 | 2.90 |
| Discount rate for scheme liabilities | 5.00 | 5.30 | 5.00 | 5.30 |
| Inflation assumption (CPI) | 2.60 | 2.80 | 2.60 | 2.80 |
| Commutation of pensions to lump sums | 50.00 | 50.00 | 50.00 | 50.00 |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

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

| | At 31 August 2024 | At 31 August 2023 |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Retiring today</i> | | |
| Males | 20.8 | 20.8 |
| Females | 23.4 | 23.3 |
| <i>Retiring in 20 years</i> | | |
| Males | 22.0 | 22.1 |
| Females | 25.1 | 25.1 |

| | Belvedere Fair value at 31 Aug 2024 £'000 | Belvedere Fair value at 31 Aug 2023 £'000 | Birkenhead Fair value at 31 Aug 2024 £'000 | Birkenhead Fair value at 31 Aug 2023 £'000 |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Equities | 2,080 | 1,748 | 1836 | 1,455 |
| Government bonds | 188 | 192 | 166 | 160 |
| Other bonds | 66 | 60 | 59 | 50 |
| Property | 442 | 403 | 390 | 336 |
| Cash | 59 | 37 | 52 | 31 |
| Other | 1,076 | 921 | 950 | 767 |
| Total market value of assets | 3,911 | 3,361 | 3,453 | 2,799 |
| Present value of scheme liabilities | (3,911) | (3,452) | (3,595) | (3,041) |
| (Deficit) in the scheme | - | (91) | (142) | (242) |

The actual return on the scheme assets was a gain of:

- Belvedere £297,000 (2023: £114,000)
- Birkenhead £255,000 (2023: £88,000)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

Amount recognised in the statement of financial activities

| | Belvedere | Belvedere | Birkenhead | Birkenhead |
|---|------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------|
| | 2024 | 2023 | 2024 | 2023 |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Current service cost (net of employer contributions) | (51) | 29 | (66) | 23 |
| Past service cost | - | - | - | - |
| Net interest cost | (3) | 18 | 4 | 20 |
| Admin expenses | 6 | 5 | 7 | 7 |
| Total operating charge | (48) | 52 | (55) | 50 |

The actuarial gains and losses for the current year are recognised in the statement of financial activities. The cumulative amount of actuarial gains and losses recognised in the statement of financial activities since the adoption of FRS 102 is a gain of £2,258,000 (2023: £3,050,000).

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

| | Belvedere | Belvedere | Birkenhead | Birkenhead |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | 2024 | 2023 | 2024 | 2023 |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| At 1 September | 3,452 | 3,582 | 3,041 | 2,921 |
| Current service cost | 194 | 218 | 246 | 296 |
| Past service cost | - | - | - | - |
| Interest cost | 182 | 155 | 163 | 126 |
| Employee contributions | 82 | 69 | 88 | 81 |
| Actuarial loss/(gain) | 68 | (529) | 51 | (355) |
| Benefits paid | (67) | (43) | 6 | (28) |
| Actuarial (gains) not recognised | (12) | - | - | - |
| At 31 August 2024 | 3,899 | 3,452 | 3,595 | 3,041 |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

Movements in the fair value of Academy's share of scheme assets:

| | Belvedere | Belvedere | Birkenhead | Birkenhead |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|--------------|
| | 2024 | 2023 | 2024 | 2023 |
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| At 1 September | 3,361 | 3,089 | 2,799 | 2,291 |
| Expected return on assets | 185 | 137 | 159 | 106 |
| Actuarial gains/(losses) | 111 | (75) | 96 | 83 |
| Employer contributions | 245 | 189 | 312 | 273 |
| Employee contributions | 82 | 69 | 88 | 81 |
| Benefits paid | (67) | (43) | 6 | (28) |
| Administration expenses | (6) | (5) | (7) | (7) |
| At 31 August 2024 | 3,911 | 3,361 | 3,453 | 2,799 |

Amounts recognised in the balance sheet

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|----------------|---------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Present value of the defined benefit obligations | 7,494 | 6,493 |
| Fair value of the academy trust's share of scheme assets | (7,364) | (6,160) |
| Scheme in surplus not recognised in the balance sheet | 12 | - |
| | 142 | 333 |

The pension surplus of £12,000 for The Belvedere Academy at 31 August 2024, assessed in accordance with FRS102, is not recognised in the balance sheet as the academy is unable to recover this surplus from the pension scheme.

The estimated value of employer contributions for the year ending 31 August 2025 is:

- Belvedere £254,000
- Birkenhead £308,000

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS (continued)

GDST Defined Benefits Pension Scheme

The GDST scheme is a funded defined benefits scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee administered funds. The scheme was closed to new entrants and to future accrual of benefits as of 31 December 2016.

The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £nil (2023: £nil) of which employer's contributions totalled £nil (2023: £nil) and employees' contributions totalled £nil (2023: £nil).

| Principal Actuarial Assumptions | At 31 August 2024 | At 31 August 2023 |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Rate of increase in salaries | N/A | N/A |
| Rate of increase for pensions in payment/ inflation | 2.50% | 2.50% |
| Discount rate for scheme liabilities | 4.98% | 5.23% |
| Inflation assumption (CPI) | 2.92% | 3.06% |

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

| | Fair value at 31 Aug 2024 £'000 | Fair value at 31 Aug 2023 £'000 |
|--|--|--|
| Equities | 237 | 246 |
| Other bonds | - | 45 |
| Other | 129 | 114 |
| Cash | 50 | 50 |
| LDI | 192 | 116 |
| Total market value of assets | 608 | 571 |
| Present value of scheme liabilities | (672) | (645) |
| (Deficit) in the scheme | (64) | (74) |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS (continued)

GDST Defined Benefits Pension Scheme

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

| | At 31 August 2024 | At 31 August 2023 |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Retiring today</i> | | |
| Males | 21.9 | 21.9 |
| Females | 24.3 | 24.3 |
| <i>Retiring in 20 years</i> | | |
| Males | 23.5 | 23.5 |
| Females | 25.8 | 25.7 |

Total expenditure recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Net interest cost | (3) | (4) |
| Current service cost | - | - |
| Curtailments and administration expenses | (3) | (3) |
| Total operating charge | (6) | (7) |

The actuarial gains and losses for the current year are recognised in the statement of financial activities. The cumulative amount of actuarial gains and losses recognised in the statement of financial activities since the adoption of FRS 102 is a gain of £206,000 (2023: £202,000).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS (continued)

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

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| At 1 September | 645 | 798 |
| Interest cost | 33 | 33 |
| Actuarial loss/(gain) | 25 | (149) |
| Benefits paid | (31) | (37) |
| At 31 August | 672 | 645 |

Movements in the fair value of the Academy Trust's share of scheme assets:

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| At 1 September | 571 | 713 |
| Interest income | 29 | 29 |
| Actuarial gains/(losses) | 29 | (144) |
| Employer contributions | 13 | 13 |
| Benefits paid | (31) | (37) |
| Administration expenses | (3) | (3) |
| At 31 August | 608 | 571 |

The estimated value of employer contributions for the year ending 31 August 2025 is £nil.

The Trustees are aware of the 'Virgin Media Ltd v NTL Pension Trustees II Ltd (and others)' case. There is a potential for the outcome of the case to have an impact on the UK pension scheme. The case affects defined benefit schemes that provided contracted-out benefits before 6 April 2016 based on meeting the reference scheme test. Where scheme rules were amended, potentially impacting benefits accrued from 6 April 1997 to 5 April 2016, schemes needed the actuary to confirm that the reference scheme test was still being met by providing written confirmation under Section 37 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993. In the Virgin Media case the judge ruled that alterations to the scheme rules were void and ineffective because of the absence of written actuarial confirmation required under Section 37 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993. The case was taken to The Court of Appeal in June 2024 and the original ruling was upheld.

As a result, there may be a further liability to the pension scheme for benefits that were reduced by previous amendments, if those amendments prove invalid (i.e. were made without obtaining s37 confirmation). The trustees and their legal advisors have started reviewing the records of the scheme to look for evidence of having obtained the necessary written actuarial confirmation where relevant. The trustees will continue to investigate the possible implications with their advisers, but it is not possible at present to estimate the potential impact, if any, on the scheme and consequently on the defined benefit obligation in the financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

24 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Owing to the nature of the Academy Trust's operations and the composition of the board of trustees/local governing body being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, it is inevitable that transactions will take place with organisations in which a trustee/local governor may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook, including notifying 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.

The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), the main sponsor of the Academy Trust, had the following trustees in common during the year:

Hilary Ann Ewing
Judith Simons

Cheryl Giovannoni, the Chief Executive of the GDST is also a trustee of the Academy Trust. Jonathan Davis, the former Chief Financial Officer of the GDST, resigned as a trustee during the year.

Expenditure related party transactions

A formal operating agreement exists between the Academy Trust and the GDST whereby the GDST shall supply a number of services to the Academy Trust (at no more than such services could reasonably be obtained in the open market). The GDST has carried out a costing exercise to demonstrate that all services provided have actually been delivered to the Academy Trust at less than cost. The amount of services supplied in the year ended 31 August 2024 is as follows:

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| ICT support services | 84 | 84 |
| Payroll services | 15 | 15 |
| Internal audit services | 1 | 1 |
| | 100 | 100 |

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (continued)

Creditors includes the sum of £646,835 (2023: £557,267) which was due from the Academy Trust to the GDST at 31 August 2024. This amount comprises:

| | 2024 £'000 | 2023 £'000 |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Reimbursement of payroll costs | 615 | 528 |
| Creditor for services/advice | 32 | 29 |
| | <u>647</u> | <u>557</u> |

Income related party transactions

During the year revenue donations totalling £75,672 (2023: £39,428) were received from GDST.

Debtors include the sum of £nil (2023: £797) receivable from the GDST.

25 TRUSTEES' AND LOCAL GOVERNORS' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

The Principals and other staff Governors only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of Principal and Staff, and not in respect of their services as Governors. Other Governors did not receive any payments from the Academy Trust in respect of their role as Governors.

26 ULTIMATE CONTROLLING COMPANY

The immediate parent undertaking and ultimate controlling party is The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) which is both a charity (charity registration number 306983) and a limited company (company registration number 00006400). Control is exercised through the parent's power to appoint or remove the majority of trustees.

The charitable aim of the GDST is to advance the education of young people (principally girls) by the provision of: schools in the United Kingdom; services to other educational charities, schools and institutions; and other ancillary or incidental educational activities. The consolidated financial statements of GDST are available to the public and may be obtained from Companies House.

27 AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

The Academy Trust distributes 16-19 Bursary Funds to students as an agent for ESFA. In the year ended 31 August 2024 the Academy Trust received £61,252 (2023: £52,482) and disbursed £43,957 (2023: £46,519) from the Fund. Unspent Bursary Funding of £66,176 (2023: £48,882) is included in creditors.