

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	Mr B Briars (Resigned 13 May 2024) Mrs H Redding Mrs J Bull Mrs B Dudas
Trustees	C Jones, Chair M Steer S Chessum (Resigned 29 November 2024) C McGuckian D Nicol I Hanahoe J Slender (Resigned 4 June 2024) A Jeram J Stirratt (Appointed 1 September 2023, Resigned 18 November 2024)
Company Registered Number	07928028
Company name	Life Academies Trust
Registered and Principal Office	Biggleswade Academy Mead End Biggleswade Bedfordshire SG18 8JU
Company Secretary	S J Spruth
Accounting Officer	Mr M Steer
Senior Leadership Team	Mr M Steer, Academy Principal and CEO Mrs R Wilson, Vice Principal Mrs D Huckle, Associate Principal Mrs H Cuthell, Associate Principal Mr E Lopes, Associate Principal Mrs E Wyatt (Resigned 31 December 2023), Head of Early Years

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Independent Auditors	Price Bailey LLP Causeway House 1 Dane Street Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire CM23 3BT
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Bankers	Lloyds Bank plc PO Box 1000 Andover BX1 1LT
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Solicitors	Stone King LLP 16 St John's Lane London EC1M 4BS
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LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the financial statements and Auditor's Report of LIFE Academies Trust ("the Charitable Company" or "the Trust") for the year to 31 August 2024. The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' Report, and a Directors' Report under company law.

Up until September 2024, the Trust operated one through school academy (2-13) serving catchment areas in Biggleswade (Central Bedfordshire). From September 2024 the new age range is 2-11. The Academy had a roll of 1170 in the census from Summer 2024 (1218, Summer 2023).

Structure, Governance and Management Constitution

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents. The Trustees of LIFE Academies Trust are also the Directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law. Within this report the terms Trustee and Director are interchangeable.

The operation of the Academy and employment of staff are the responsibility of the Trustees. The Trust retains control of Academy budgets and finances, and monitors these through its Finance, Risk, Resources and Audit Committee. Within this Report, the term Trustee refers to a member of the Board of Trustees. Details of the Trustees who served during the year, and to the date these accounts are approved are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 1.

Members' Liability

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

Trustees' and Officers' Indemnities

The Trust has opted to be covered under the Government's Risk Protection Arrangements (RPA) scheme to protect Trustees, Governors and Officers, from claims arising from negligent acts, omissions or errors whilst performing Trust business.

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

The arrangements are as set out in the Articles and Funding Agreement.

Trustees are appointed for a fixed term. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees. Parent Trustees and the staff Trustees are elected to office or appointed if there are insufficient candidates offering themselves for election. Co-opted Trustees are elected by the existing Trustee cohort and their appointment is ratified by the Members of the Trust. The Articles of Association make provision for not less than three Trustees and not subject to a maximum (including two Parents and others) plus the CEO.

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

The Trust is committed to providing adequate opportunities for Trustees and Governors to undertake and receive suitable training so as to enable them to perform their role effectively. To this end the Trust provides internal training led by Trust and School staff and also links with a number of local training providers.

All new Trustees and Governors have an induction programme, according to their need, which includes introductory sessions, mentoring, formal training courses, and a tour of their School. This process will involve a meeting with the Chair of Trustees or Chair of the LGB as necessary, selected students and staff. All Trustees and Governors are provided with a handbook plus copies of policies and procedures documents that are appropriate to the role they undertake as Trustees and Governors with particular emphasis on the committee work that they will undertake.

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

Organisational Structure

The governance of the Trust is defined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association together with the Funding Agreement with the Department of Education.

The Trustees meet on at least six occasions per year and are responsible for the strategic direction of the Trust. The Trustees are responsible for setting strategic policy, adopting an annual plan and budget, monitoring The Trust by the use of those budgets and making major decisions about the direction of The Trust, capital expenditure, senior staff appointments and executive pay. They will also ensure the appropriateness of annual budgets and capital expenditure projects for their Academy and monitoring performance against that budget and authorised capital limits. Trustees are members of one or two sub-committees, the terms of reference for which are reviewed annually, who report to the Trustees.

The Academy Senior Leadership Team (SLT) controls the Academy at an executive level implementing policies and reporting to the Trustees. The SLT is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Academy, in particular organising staff, resources and students. They are responsible for the authorisation of spending in accordance with the agreed spending limits within financial regulations and agreed budgets and for the appointment of staff, below senior leadership level i.e. Vice Principal and above, following vetting and safeguarding recruitment processes.

The CEO is the designated Accounting Officer and has overall responsibility for the day-to-day financial management of the Trust. The CEO manages the Trust on a daily basis supported by a Senior Leadership Team. The Senior Leadership Team meets frequently to discuss emerging matters and to help to develop strategies for future development to be put to the Trustees as required for approval.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

Key management personnel include Trustees and those staff to whom the Trustees have delegated significant authority and responsibility in the day-to-day running of the Trust.

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

All amendments to key management's pay and remuneration is approved by the appropriate sub-committee and ratified by the Trustees.

Trade Union Facility Time

The Trust had two employees that were trade union representatives, but had also continued to contribute to a pooled arrangement with Central Bedfordshire.

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

Owing to the nature of the Trust's operations and the composition of the Trustees being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, it is inevitable that from time to time transactions will take place with organisations in which a Trustee may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the Trust's financial regulations and normal procedures. Any transaction where the Trustee may have a pecuniary interest is only undertaken in accordance with the 'at cost' principle described in the Academies Trust Handbook.

The Trust did not cooperate with any related party during the academic year in pursuit of its charitable activities and does not have a formal sponsor.

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

Objectives and Activities

Objects and Aims

The principal object and aim of the Trust was the operation of a family of Academies to provide free education and care for pupils of different abilities between the ages of 2 and 13. Specifically to enable each child to realise their full academic, creative and physical potential and to develop positive social and moral values.

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

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

- ensuring that every child enjoys the same high quality education in terms of resourcing, tuition and care;
- raising the standard of educational achievement of all pupils;
- developing resilient, resourceful students;
- adapting and applying skills for flexible life-long learning;
- improving the effectiveness of the school by keeping the curriculum and organisational structure under continual review;
- providing value for money for the funds expended; and
- conducting the Trust's business in accordance with the highest standards of integrity.

Through their mission:

- to promote the best habits of independent thought and learning in the pursuit of excellence;
- to provide a broadly-based education designed to enable all pupils to discover their strengths, and to make the most of their talents within the Academy and beyond;
- to engender respect for individuality, difference, the importance of teamwork and the contribution that each pupil makes to the life of the school and the community;
- to provide supporting pastoral care that nurtures physical health, emotional maturity and spiritual richness;
- to foster self-confidence, enthusiasm, perseverance, tolerance and integrity.

The success in fulfilling aims can be measured by:

- Good or better pupils outcomes against national data;
- Rising admissions;
- A positive reputation;
- To develop morally good, socially successful young people with a lifelong love of learning.

Public Benefit

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

Strategic Report

Achievements and Performance

The Trust continued its mission to ensure that students achieved their potential in public examinations; encouraged a wide range of extra-curricular activities; developed and retained suitable staff and guided students in suitable progression when they left their School.

Specific achievements were as follows:

- The successful completion of one CIF bid related to a full upgrade to the water supply throughout the school
- The remodelling of the Kitelands site for Early Years and Reception age children, the remodelling of London Road as and ASD ARP provision, the start of the remodelling process

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- of Mead End for children in Years 1 to 2
- Continued implementation of the Character Development programme
- Continued support and training on the whole school curriculum projects of Maths Mastery and Reading for Mastery
- Achieving the Ofsted rating of 'Good' against the new framework
- Phonics, Key Stage 1 and Yr4 Times Table check results are in line with national expectations , and Key Stage 2 results being significantly above national average across all subjects.
- Pupils in both Year 7 and Year 8 being submitted for accreditation through our KS3 AQA Options programme

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

The Trustees receive regular information at each committee meeting to enable them to monitor the performance of the Trust compared to aims, strategies and financial budgets.

As funding is based on pupil numbers this is a KPI. Pupil numbers (reception to year 8) for 2023/24 were 938 against a budget of 941. A further KPI is staffing costs as a percentage of total recurring income. For 2023/24 this was 76% against set parameters of 80%. The Trustees are confident that staffing levels are closely monitored to agreed Full Time Equivalent and staffing structures all approved by them.

The Finance Committee also monitor premises costs to General Annual Grant (GAG) income, capitation spend for curriculum departments to GAG income, total income less grants and cash flow on a regular basis to ensure that the budget is set and managed appropriately. All of the above KPI's were within the parameters set by the Board.

Progress through Key Stage One to Key Stage Two

Progress Measures	Reading	Writing	Maths
BA Cohort 2022/23	0.97	-0.15	1.57
Average Scaled Score	106.2 (Nat 105.1)	n/a	105.9 (Nat 104.2)

Going Concern

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

Financial Review

The principal source of funding for the Trust is the GAG and other grants that it receives from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). For the year ended 31 August 2024 the Trust received £8,950,515 (2023: £9,275,729) of GAG and other income. A high percentage of this income is spent on wages and salaries and support costs to deliver the Trust's primary objective of the provision of education. During the year the Trust spent a total of £8,810,669 (2023: £6,547,192) on general running costs.

The Trust brought forward from 22/23, £1,225,673 of restricted funds excluding pension reserve and £1,606,550 of unrestricted. The carry forward for 23/24 is £1,754,374 of restricted funds excluding pension reserve and £1,023,954 of unrestricted.

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	Restricted General Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Fixed Asset Fund	Pension Reserve	Total
Incoming Resources	6,687,402	463,240	1,799,873	-	8,950,515
Resources Expended	(6,158,701)	(492,021)	(1,892,268)		(8,542,990)
LGPS Charge				(334,000)	(334,000)
Depreciation			(348,679)		(348,679)
Employer contributions paid				415,000	415,000
Total Resources Expended	(6,158,701)	(492,021)	(2,240,947)	81,000	(8,810,669)
Assets Purchased from GAG	-	(553,816)	553,816		-
Actuarial Gains				(34,000)	(34,000)
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	528,701	(582,597)	112,742	47,000	105,846
Balance at 1 September 2023	1,225,673	1,606,550	11,172,365	(47,000)	13,957,588
Balance at 31 August 2024	1,754,374	1,023,953	11,285,107	-	14,063,434

With a whole school staff restructure to enable the move from Middle-deemed-Primary to Primary, the school had to make a number of redundancies, the value of these were £109,000 which was funded from brought forward reserves.

The Trust has designated to spend £750,000 from reserves to fund the development and expansion of the Academy at the Kitelands Road location.

These planned costs will see our reserves fall considerably.

With pupil numbers dropping (as there are no longer Yr7 and Yr8 pupils at the Academy), future funding will be lower, and the Local Authority's Growth Funding formula disadvantages us.

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

Reserves Policy

The Trustees are aware of the requirement to balance current and future needs and always aim to set a balanced budget with annual income balancing annual expenditure. The Trustees monitor estimated year-end carry forward figures via the monthly reports from the CFO. The budget plan identifies how any carry forward will be allocated in the plan for the following academic year, including the identification of any funds earmarked for a specific project or purpose.

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

The Trustees have determined that the appropriate level of reserves to be held for non-earmarked expenditure should equate to 2% of total funds to provide sufficient working capital to cover delays in the spending and receipt of grants and to provide a cushion for unexpected emergencies. The Trustees have deemed it necessary to hold reserves in excess of this until the Schools for the Future project has been completed to enable us to fund a restructure, which will result in redundancies, and building alterations required which are not covered by the Local Authority.

The Trust's current level of free reserves (total funds less the amount held in fixed assets and restricted funds) is £1,023,954 (2023: £1,606,550) of which £750,000 is designated for the Kiteland Road project. This has been built up from a mixture of locally raised income and balances transferred from the predecessor schools. The Trusts policy is to maintain 2% of total funds in reserves which at the year end equated to £281,269 and therefore the Trust holds reserves in excess of its current policy level.

The Trust's balance on restricted general funds (excluding pension reserve) plus the balance on unrestricted funds at 31 August 2024 was £2,778,327 (2023: £2,832,223).

The cash balance of the Trust has been very healthy all year, ending the year with a balance of £4,189,942 (2023: £3,740,603). A significant proportion of this cash is held against specific projects and is not available to meet normal recurring expenditure.

Investment Policy

An Investment Policy was approved by the Trustees in November 2023.

The aim of the policy is to ensure funds that the Trust does not immediately need to cover anticipated expenditure are invested to maximise the Trust's income but with minimal risk. The aim is to research where funds may be deposited applying prudence in ensuring there is minimum risk. The Trustees do not consider the investment of surplus funds as a primary activity, rather as good stewardship and as and when circumstances allow.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trustees maintain a risk register identifying the major risks to which the Trust are exposed, and identifying actions and procedures to mitigate those risks. A formal review of the risk register process is undertaken on an annual basis and the internal control systems and the exposure to said risks are monitored on behalf of the Trustees at each Finance, Risk, Resources and Audit Committee (FRRAC) meeting. The principal risks facing the Trust are outlined below; those facing the Trust at an operational level are addressed by its systems and by internal financial and other controls.

The Trustees report that the Trust's financial and internal controls conform to guidelines issued by the ESFA, and that improvements to the wider framework of systems dealing with business risk and risk management strategy continue to be made and formally documented.

It is recognised that systems can only provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that major risks have been adequately managed.

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

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

- the Trust has considerable reliance on continued Government funding through the ESFA and whilst there has been a small injection of additional funding this will not be enough to counteract the rise of the minimum wage, teachers pensions contribution rise and any other additional costs that the Government may choose to introduce;

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- failures in governance and/or management - the risk in this area arises from potential failure to effectively manage the Trust's finances, internal controls, compliance with regulations and legislation, statutory returns, etc. The Trustees continue to review and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate these risks;
- reputational - the continuing success of the school is dependent on continuing to attract applicants in sufficient numbers by maintaining the highest educational standards. To mitigate this risk Trustees ensure that student progress and outcomes are closely monitored and reviewed;
- safeguarding and child protection - the Trustees continue to ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the areas of selection and monitoring of staff, the operation of child protection policies and procedures, health & safety and discipline;
- staffing - the success of the Schools is reliant on the quality of its staff and the Trustees monitor and review policies and procedures and recruitment to ensure continued development and training of staff as well as ensuring there is clear succession planning;
- fraud and mismanagement of funds - the Trustees have appointed SBM Services to carry out a programme of internal scrutiny which includes independent and external checks on financial systems and records as required by the Academy Trust Handbook. All finance staff receive training to keep up to date with financial practice requirements and develop their skills in this area;
- financial instruments – the Trust only deals with bank balances, cash and trade creditors, with limited trade (and other) debtors. The risk in this area is considered to be low; and
- defined benefit pension scheme liability – as the Government has agreed to meet the defined benefit pension liability of any school ceasing to exist the main risk to the Trust is the annual cash flow funding of part of the deficit. Trustees take these payments into account when setting the annual budget plan.

The Trust has continued to strengthen its risk management process throughout the year by improving the process and ensuring staff awareness.

Estates Management

The Trustees carefully consider those risks impacting on trustees' responsibilities to ensure the trust's estate is safe, well maintained and complies with relevant regulations. A bi-annual External Health & Safety Audit ensure we comply with all relevant regulations and any areas identified are addressed. The Trustee responsible for Health & Safety visits termly to meet with the SLT responsible for Health & Safety. A system is in place to schedule works required to ensure the estate is safe and well maintained.

Review of Value for Money

FRRAC reviews spend levels of the Trust and items with a value exceeding £5,000 are subject to a tender process.

Fundraising

The Trust does not work with professional fundraisers or companies who carry out fundraising on its behalf. During the year no complaints or issues have arisen as a result of the fundraising events. All fundraising undertaken during the year was monitored by the Trustees

Measures taken to improve energy efficiency

As the trust has not consumed more than 40,000 kWh of energy in this reporting period, it qualifies as a low energy user under these regulations and is not required to report on its emissions, energy consumption or energy efficiency activities.

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

Plans for Future Periods

The Trust has 3 main areas of future focus:

1. To establish the future direction and development of the Trust, once the Central Bedfordshire Council's Schools for the Future Programme is complete.
2. Fully utilising all opportunities to network with, learn from and co-develop plans and strategies for educational improvement and development with high quality local and regional MAT providers- our practice reflects the very best available at all times.
3. Continue to focus on school improvement following the latest Ofsted within the Academy and the Early Years settings.

Auditors

The Auditors, Price Bailey LLP, are willing to continue in office and a resolution to appoint them will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

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

The Trustees' Report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by the Board of Trustees on 17 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Mr C Jones
Chair of Trustees

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of responsibility

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

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

The Board of Trustees have delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the CEO, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between LIFE Academies Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The Board of Trustees have formally met 10 times during the year and is satisfied that through the use of sub-committees it maintains effective oversight of funds. Details of such sub-committees are noted below.

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

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
C Jones, Chair	8	10
M Steer	10	10
S Chessum	6	10
C McGuckian	9	10
D Nicol	9	10
J Stirratt	8	10
I Hanahoe	10	10
J Slender	5	9
A Jeram	5	10

Review of year

Trustees met with the CEO and other members of the Senior Leadership Team at scheduled meetings, approximately each half term. The primary focus for each meeting is identified via the 'Annual Trustee Calendar', with further items added by the Chair of Trustees or the CEO in response to the school calendar.

All minutes and associated documents were shared via a collaborative website Governor Hub.

All Trustees completed a number of mandated online learning modules on areas such as Monitoring and Evaluation, Progress and Attainment Data, Governors and Ofsted and Monitoring Performance Data and Targets and are provided with weekly updates via the Central Bedfordshire 'Essential Governor' and national updates from the National Governor Association.

- Safeguarding and KCSiE
- GDPR
- The Academies Trust Handbook

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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Governance (continued)

In addition, each Trustee is expected to use the result of their personal audits to create their own personalised development programme. Trustees should undertake courses that:

- aid the strategic priorities of the board
- support the effectiveness of the committees they sit on

Trustees have visited the school frequently as part of their monitoring of the SDP and to support in the process of the school moving to the status of a primary school as part of the Local Authority's Schools for the Future initiative. As part of the SDP, these visits were considered a valuable opportunity for Trustees to be able to work closely with staff members across the school. Designated Trustees also attend termly meetings with the Academy DSP, Health and Safety Lead, SENDCo. Formal visits were minuted and fed back to the CEO for acknowledgement or follow up. The impact of these visits included: recognising and celebrating the success of pupils and staff, monitoring policies in action, informing decision making and finding out what resources are needed and prioritise them. As part of the Schools of the Future initiative, Trustees have supported the CEO in a staff restructure consultation, a catchment consultation and in meeting with the Local Authority elected leaders to support the build work required at the school.

Data was made available to Trustees through termly meetings with verbal and written presentations followed by question and answer sessions with the CEO, members of the senior management team and SENDCo. As a result Trustees were able to benchmark their data against similar schools, the Local Authority and schools nationally to ensure the schools standards and expectations are high and are able to be closely scrutinised. Particular scrutiny is placed on pupils' progress across all ability groups including vulnerable groups and on the effective use of the Pupil Premium, although due to the pandemic, DfE provided national data is limited.

Trustees reviewed all relevant policies on a scheduled basis to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date.

Specific attention is paid to ensure that the school complies with the Department of Education mandatory policy list and the Local Authority recommended list.

The school is in a balanced financial position; staff are used efficiently to maximise learning impact and understand the need for prudent spending and this is monitored by Trustees through monthly Finance, Risk, Resources and Audit meetings.

Conflicts of interest

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

There are no conflicts of interest at this time.

Governance reviews

A full and comprehensive governance review was undertaken in the autumn term and through use of the trustee calendar, further reviews are scheduled to take place annually.

Committees

The finance, risk, resources and audit committee (FRRAC) is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees.

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

In addition to reviewing the strategic overview of the Academy and holding the CEO to account against the key performance indicators, the committee actively supported in all areas of the Local Authorities Schools for the Future initiative.

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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Governance (continued)

This involved a whole school staff restructure consultation, a consultation on catchment areas, the monitoring of build plans and developments, and being present to support staff at meetings and sit on redundancy hearings.

In June the school had a two day Ofsted inspection, in which Trustees made themselves fully available to support the Academy in achieving an overall grading of Good.

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

James Slender resigned his post.

Attendance during the year at meetings was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
C Jones, Chair	2	4
M Steer	4	4
D Nicol	3	4
A Jeram	1	4
C McGuckian	1	1
J Slender	4	4

Review of value for money

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

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

- Ensuring a continual focus on best value and understands the value of our assets and how they can be used effectively to support student achievement.
- Robustly supports fair competition through quotations and tenders, overseen by the FRRAC in accordance with its Financial Regulations. This ensures that goods and services are secured in the most economic, efficient and effective way. The Trust has introduced a formal process to ensure that there is no automatic renewal of cyclic contracts and Service Level Agreements in excess of £500. Specific areas of saving this year have included IT contracts and maintenance expenditure.
- Operates within an environment of continual change and is responsive to national directives and policy changes, plus to local demands from our wider community. As such we acknowledge that there will always be valuable lessons to be learnt and a constant need to review our procedures and systems to ensure that value for money is at the heart of everything we do to enhance the learning opportunities for our pupils. This statement refers to many examples of what we consider to be good practice to help us secure value for money at every opportunity. This in turn supports the work towards our School Development Plan that sets out clearly our specific objectives and the future direction of the academy. The SDP overview can be viewed on the Trust's website.

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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

The purpose of the system of internal control

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

Capacity to handle risk

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

The risk and control framework

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

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

The Board of Trustees has decided to buy-in an internal audit service from SBM Services

SBM Services have a strong track record and breadth of service provision. They also have a positive expertise in these areas and has been working closely with the Trust for over 5 years.

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

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

This option has been chosen because of their knowledge of the Trust, experience and cost.

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

- Financial Administration
- Income and Debtors
- Balance Sheet Management

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Review of effectiveness

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 17 December 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

C Jones
Chair of Trustees

M Steer
Accounting Officer

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

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

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

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

Mr M Steer
Accounting Officer
Date:
13 December 2024

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 17 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Mr C Jones
Chair of Trustees

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST

Opinion

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

In our opinion the financial statements:

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

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST (CONTINUED)

Other information

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of Trustees

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

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

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST (CONTINUED)

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST (CONTINUED)

Use of our report

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

Tom Meeks FCCA
for and on behalf of
Price Bailey LLP
Causeway House
1 Dane Street
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 3BT

Date:

17 December 2024

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 11 June 2024 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by LIFE Academies Trust during the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Respective responsibilities of LIFE Academies Trust's Accounting Officer and the Reporting Accountant

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

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

Approach

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

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

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

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

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

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

Conclusion

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

Reporting Accountant
Price Bailey LLP

Date:

17 December 2024

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	3	5,014	115,220	1,799,873	1,920,107	2,810,033
Other trading activities	5	254,737	-	-	254,737	250,146
Investments	6	74,186	-	-	74,186	38,096
Charitable activities	4	129,303	6,572,182	-	6,701,485	6,177,454
Total income		463,240	6,687,402	1,799,873	8,950,515	9,275,729
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	7	492,021	6,077,701	2,240,947	8,810,669	6,547,192
Total expenditure		492,021	6,077,701	2,240,947	8,810,669	6,547,192
Net income / (expenditure)		(28,781)	609,701	(441,074)	139,846	2,728,537
Transfers between funds	17	(553,816)	-	553,816	-	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		(582,597)	609,701	112,742	139,846	2,728,537
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension schemes	24	-	(34,000)	-	(34,000)	66,000
Net movement in funds		(582,597)	575,701	112,742	105,846	2,794,537
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		1,606,550	1,178,673	11,172,365	13,957,588	11,163,051
Net movement in funds		(582,597)	575,701	112,742	105,846	2,794,537
Total funds carried forward		1,023,953	1,754,374	11,285,107	14,063,434	13,957,588

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

The notes on pages 27 to 53 form part of these financial statements.

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 07928028

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets		8,706,095	8,470,884
Current assets			
Debtors	14	2,309,232	2,415,884
Cash at bank and in hand		4,189,942	3,740,603
		<u>6,499,174</u>	<u>6,156,487</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	(1,122,965)	(588,457)
Net current assets		<u>5,376,209</u>	<u>5,568,030</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>14,082,304</u>	<u>14,038,914</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	16	(18,870)	(34,326)
Net assets excluding pension asset / liability		<u>14,063,434</u>	<u>14,004,588</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme asset / liability	24	-	(47,000)
Total net assets		<u><u>14,063,434</u></u>	<u><u>13,957,588</u></u>
Funds of the Trust			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	17	11,285,107	11,172,365
Restricted income funds	17	1,754,374	1,225,673
Pension reserve	17	-	(47,000)
Total restricted funds	17	<u>13,039,481</u>	<u>12,351,038</u>
Unrestricted income funds	17	<u>1,023,953</u>	<u>1,606,550</u>
Total funds		<u><u>14,063,434</u></u>	<u><u>13,957,588</u></u>

The financial statements on pages 24 to 53 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 17 December 2024 and are signed on their behalf, by:

Mr C Jones
Chair of Trustees

The notes on pages 27 to 53 form part of these financial statements.

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities	19	(937,320)	345,717
Cash flows from investing activities	20	1,386,659	429,575
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		449,339	775,292
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		3,740,603	2,965,311
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	21, 22	<u>4,189,942</u>	<u>3,740,603</u>

The notes on pages 27 to 53 form part of these financial statements

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies

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

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

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

The functional currency of the financial statements is Pounds Sterling. The level of rounding is to the nearest £.

1.2 Going concern

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

The Trust derives the majority of its income from local and national Government grant funding which is secured for a number of years, under the terms of the Academy Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education. This will ensure that the Trust can continue operating for a period of at least 12 months following the date of this Report.

1.3 Company Status

The Trust is a Company limited by guarantee. The Members are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the Trust being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per Member. The Trust's registered office is Biggleswade Academy, Mead End, Biggleswade, SG18 8JU.

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.4 Income

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

- **Grants**

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

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

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

- **Donations**

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

- **Other income**

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

1.5 Expenditure

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

- **Charitable activities**

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.6 Taxation

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

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

1.7 Tangible fixed assets

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

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

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

Long-term leasehold property	-	2%
Leasehold improvements	-	2%
Furniture and equipment	-	20%
Computer equipment	-	33%

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

1.8 Debtors

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

1.9 Cash at bank and in hand

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

1.10 Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably. Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the 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.

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.11 Financial instruments

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

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 14. Prepayments are not financial instruments. Cash at bank is classified as a basic financial instrument and is measured at face value.

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

Financial liabilities - trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in notes 15 and 16. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition. Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument.

1.12 Operating leases

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

1.13 Pensions

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

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

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

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

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

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.14 Fund accounting

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

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

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

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

2. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

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

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

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

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

3. Income from donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Donations	5,014	115,220	-	120,234	111,271
Capital grants	-	-	1,799,873	1,799,873	2,698,762
Total 2024	<u>5,014</u>	<u>115,220</u>	<u>1,799,873</u>	<u>1,920,107</u>	<u>2,810,033</u>
Total 2023	<u>4,430</u>	<u>106,841</u>	<u>2,698,762</u>	<u>2,810,033</u>	

In 2023, income from donations was £111,271 of which £106,841 was restricted and £4,430 was unrestricted.

In 2023, income from capital grants was £2,698,762 of which all was in relation to restricted fixed asset funds.

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

4. Funding for the Trust's provision of education

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
DfE/ESFA grants				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	4,575,404	4,575,404	4,323,195
UIFSM	-	94,458	94,458	96,846
Pupil Premium	-	209,378	209,378	179,672
PE and Sports Grant	-	21,890	21,890	26,194
Teachers' Pay Grant	-	77,272	77,272	5,513
Rates Relief	-	21,151	21,151	50,573
Mainstream Schools additional grant	-	148,559	148,559	61,900
Other DfE grants	-	95,114	95,114	184,979
	-	5,243,226	5,243,226	4,928,872
Other Government grants				
Local Authority grant	-	1,328,956	1,328,956	1,120,818
Other income				
Catering income	129,303	-	129,303	127,764
	129,303	6,572,182	6,701,485	6,177,454
Total 2023	127,764	6,049,690	6,177,454	

In 2023, income from DfE/ESFA grants was £4,928,872 of which all was restricted.

In 2023, income from Other Government grants was £1,120,818 of which all was restricted.

In 2023, Other income was £127,764 of which all was unrestricted.

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

5. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Hire of facilities	73,334	73,334	73,982
Preschool fees	170,484	170,484	150,774
Other income	10,919	10,919	25,390
Total 2024	254,737	254,737	250,146
Total 2023	250,146	250,146	

In 2023, all income from trading activities was unrestricted.

6. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Bank interest	74,186	74,186	38,096
Total 2023	38,096	38,096	

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

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

7. Expenditure

	Staff Costs 2024 £	Premises 2024 £	Other 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Direct costs	4,605,881	-	222,367	4,828,248	4,356,062
Allocated support costs	961,999	2,246,323	774,099	3,982,421	2,191,130
Total 2024	<u>5,567,880</u>	<u>2,246,323</u>	<u>996,466</u>	<u>8,810,669</u>	<u>6,547,192</u>
Total 2023	<u>5,004,283</u>	<u>385,226</u>	<u>1,157,683</u>	<u>6,547,192</u>	

Of total expenditure, £492,021 (2023: £145,155) related to unrestricted funds, £6,077,702 (2023: £5,951,373) related to restricted funds and £2,240,947 (2023: £450,664) related to restricted fixed assets funds.

In the prior year, included in direct costs were £4,114,706 of staff costs and £241,356 of other costs. Included in support costs were £889,577 of staff costs, £385,226 of premises costs and £916,327 of other costs.

8. Charitable activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Direct costs	4,828,248	4,356,062
Support costs	3,982,421	2,191,130
	<u>8,810,669</u>	<u>6,547,192</u>

	2024 £	2023 £
Analysis of support costs		
Support staff costs	961,999	889,577
Depreciation	348,679	348,720
Technology costs	46,555	40,815
Premises costs	2,062,654	385,226
Other support costs	445,969	445,372
Governance costs	116,565	81,420
Total support costs	<u>3,982,421</u>	<u>2,191,130</u>

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

9. Net (expenditure)/income

Net (expenditure)/income for the year includes:

	2024 £	2023 £
Operating lease rentals	10,769	12,940
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	348,679	348,720
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	135	-
Fees paid to Auditors for:		
- audit	12,670	11,020
- other services	8,115	7,420
	<u>12,804</u>	<u>18,440</u>

10. Staff

a. Staff costs and employee benefits

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	4,229,663	3,790,842
Social security costs	349,745	310,236
Pension costs	864,909	894,780
	<u>5,444,317</u>	<u>4,995,858</u>
Staff restructuring costs	109,358	-
Agency staff costs	14,205	8,425
	<u>124,563</u>	<u>8,425</u>
	<u>5,568,880</u>	<u>5,004,283</u>

Staff restructuring costs comprise:

	2024 £	2023 £
Redundancy payments	82,528	-
Severance payments	1,318	-
Other restructuring costs	25,512	-
	<u>109,358</u>	<u>-</u>

b. Severance payments

The Trust paid 1 severance payment in the year, disclosed in the following bands:

	2024 No.
£0 - £25,000	1

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

10. Staff (continued)

c. Staff numbers

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

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Teachers	46	44
Management	5	6
Administration and support	137	142
	<u>188</u>	<u>192</u>

d. Higher paid staff

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

	2024 No.	2023 No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	2	1
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

e. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Trust comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Trust was £484,510 (2023: £487,963). Included in this figure is £41,611 (2023: £42,376) of employers national insurance and £90,406 (2023: £85,313) of employers pension.

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

11. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

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

		2024 £	2023 £
M Steer	Remuneration	85,000 - 90,000	80,000 - 85,000
	Pension contributions paid	20,000 - 25,000	15,000 - 20,000
E Wyatt (Resigned as Trustee on 31 August 2023)	Remuneration	-	50,000 - 55,000
	Pension contributions paid	-	10,000 - 15,000

During the year, retirement benefits were accruing to 2 Trustees (2023 - 2) in respect of defined contribution pension schemes.

During the year ended 31 August 2024, no Trustee expenses have been incurred (2023 - £NIL).

12. Trustees' and Officers' insurance

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

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

13. Tangible fixed assets

	Long-term leasehold property £	Leasehold improvement s £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation					
At 1 September 2023	9,659,181	-	992,893	443,931	11,096,005
Additions	-	495,409	54,221	34,395	584,025
Disposals	-	-	(1,615)	(28,544)	(30,159)
At 31 August 2024	9,659,181	495,409	1,045,499	449,782	11,649,871
Depreciation					
At 1 September 2023	1,637,479	-	582,898	404,744	2,625,121
Charge for the year	165,010	-	156,998	26,671	348,679
On disposals	-	-	(1,480)	(28,544)	(30,024)
At 31 August 2024	1,802,489	-	738,416	402,871	2,943,776
Net book value					
At 31 August 2024	7,856,692	495,409	307,083	46,911	8,706,095
At 31 August 2023	8,021,702	-	409,995	39,187	8,470,884

14. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	29,039	2,226
VAT recoverable	46,887	15,430
Prepayments	67,607	104,784
Accrued income	2,165,699	2,293,444
	2,309,232	2,415,884

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

15. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Salix loan	15,457	15,457
Trade creditors	231,112	99,886
Other taxation and social security	75,143	158,319
Accruals and deferred income	801,253	314,795
	<u>1,122,965</u>	<u>588,457</u>
	2024 £	2023 £
Deferred income brought forward	120,954	106,109
Resources deferred during the year	81,772	120,954
Amounts released from previous periods	(120,954)	(106,109)
Deferred income carried forward	<u>81,772</u>	<u>120,954</u>

At the balance sheet date the majority of deferred income related to amounts received in advance in relation to trips, UFISM income and lettings income, as well as fees received in advance in relation to the preschool.

16. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Salix loan	18,870	34,326

The aggregate amount of liabilities payable or repayable wholly or in part more than five years after the reporting date is:

	2024 £	2023 £
Repayable by instalments	2,898	5,253

The amount provided for in other loans are three Salix loans provided to the Trust by the Department for Education. One loan is repayable within 8 years and the total outstanding is £8,029 (2023 - £9,176). The loan is repayable in instalments every 6 months and bears no interest. The second Salix loan is repayable within 4 years and the total outstanding is £19,652 (2023 - £32,753). The loan is repayable in instalments every 6 months and bears no interest. The final Salix loan is repayable within 7 years and the total outstanding is £6,645 (2023 - £7,854). The loan is repayable in instalments every 6 months and bears no interest.

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

17. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2024 £
Unrestricted funds						
Designated funds	-	-	-	750,000	-	750,000
General funds	1,606,550	463,240	(492,021)	(1,303,816)	-	273,953
Total Unrestricted funds	1,606,550	463,240	(492,021)	(553,816)	-	1,023,953
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,225,673	4,575,404	(4,046,703)	-	-	1,754,374
Pupil Premium	-	209,378	(209,378)	-	-	-
SEN funding	-	608,836	(608,836)	-	-	-
Other Government grants	-	16,169	(16,169)	-	-	-
Other DfE and ESFA	-	458,444	(458,444)	-	-	-
Trips donations	-	115,220	(115,220)	-	-	-
Early years funding	-	703,951	(703,951)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(47,000)	-	81,000	-	(34,000)	-
	1,178,673	6,687,402	(6,077,701)	-	(34,000)	1,754,374
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Restricted fixed asset funds	8,470,883	-	(348,679)	583,892	-	8,706,096
DFC	-	17,830	(17,830)	-	-	-
CIF	2,701,482	1,683,622	(1,874,438)	-	-	2,510,666
Schools for the Future	-	98,421	-	(30,076)	-	68,345
	11,172,365	1,799,873	(2,240,947)	553,816	-	11,285,107

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

17. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2024 £
Total Restricted funds	12,351,038	8,487,275	(8,318,648)	553,816	(34,000)	13,039,481
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total funds	13,957,588	8,950,515	(8,810,669)	-	(34,000)	14,063,434
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

17. Statement of funds (continued)

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

General Annual Grant (GAG)

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

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

Pupil Premium

This funding is to be used to raise achievement and improve outcomes for pupils from low income families who are eligible for free school meals.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

This represents allocated funding for special education needs pupils.

Other Government grants

This represents various small grants from local and national government bodies for the provision of specific services to pupils of the Academy.

Other DfE and ESFA

This represents funding received towards specific purposes, including contributions towards school trips.

Trip Donations

This represents contributions made by parents to the running of educational visits for the pupils of the Academy and the associated costs of running the trips.

Early years funding

This represents funding from the ESFA to provide funding for all 3-4 year old children to attend early years.

Pensions reserve

This fund represents the Trust's share of the deficit on the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) transferred to the Trust on conversion from a state controlled school.

Restricted fixed asset fund

Restricted fixed asset fund are resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by the DfE where the asset acquired or created is held for a purpose. Additions acquired during the year have been transferred to this fund.

Devolved formula capital (DFC)

The trust is to use the DFC allocation to maintain and improve its buildings and facilities.

Condition Improvement Fund (CIF)

This represents grants received or receivable for building improvements.

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

17. Statement of funds (continued)

Schools for the Future

This represents grant income received to buy furniture, fixtures and IT equipment as part of the schools transition to a primary school.

Designated Funds

The designated transfer in the year relates to funds which are designated for the development and expansion of the Academy at the Kitelands Road location.

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

17. Statement of funds (continued)

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

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
Unrestricted funds						
General funds	1,554,849	420,436	(334,164)	(34,571)	-	1,606,550
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	751,283	4,323,195	(3,705,830)	(142,975)	-	1,225,673
Pupil Premium	-	179,672	(179,672)	-	-	-
SEN funding	-	459,396	(459,396)	-	-	-
Other Government grants	-	35,718	(35,718)	-	-	-
Other DfE and ESFA	76,347	426,005	(502,352)	-	-	-
Trips donations	-	106,841	(106,841)	-	-	-
Early years funding	-	625,704	(625,704)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	-	-	(113,000)	-	66,000	(47,000)
	827,630	6,156,531	(5,728,513)	(142,975)	66,000	1,178,673
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Restricted fixed asset funds	8,766,474	-	(348,721)	53,130	-	8,470,883
DFC	-	17,385	-	(17,385)	-	-
CIF	14,098	2,647,526	(101,943)	141,801	-	2,701,482
Schools for the Future	-	33,851	(33,851)	-	-	-
	8,780,572	2,698,762	(484,515)	177,546	-	11,172,365
Total Restricted funds	9,608,202	8,855,293	(6,213,028)	34,571	66,000	12,351,038
Total funds	11,163,051	9,275,729	(6,547,192)	-	66,000	13,957,588

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

18. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current period

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	8,706,095	8,706,095
Current assets	1,023,953	2,401,051	3,074,170	6,499,174
Creditors due within one year	-	(646,677)	(476,288)	(1,122,965)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	-	(18,870)	(18,870)
Total	<u>1,023,953</u>	<u>1,754,374</u>	<u>11,285,107</u>	<u>14,063,434</u>

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior period

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	8,470,884	8,470,884
Current assets	1,606,550	1,798,673	2,751,264	6,156,487
Creditors due within one year	-	(573,000)	(15,457)	(588,457)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	-	(34,326)	(34,326)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(47,000)	-	(47,000)
Total	<u>1,606,550</u>	<u>1,178,673</u>	<u>11,172,365</u>	<u>13,957,588</u>

LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Net income for the period (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	139,846	2,728,537
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	348,815	348,721
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(1,911,381)	(458,921)
Interest receivable	(74,186)	(38,096)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	106,652	(2,171,393)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	519,051	(190,442)
Pension adjustment	(81,000)	113,000
Loan repayments	14,883	14,311
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities	(937,320)	345,717

20. Cash flows from investing activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Interest	74,186	38,096
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(584,025)	(53,131)
Capital grants from DfE Group	1,911,381	458,921
Loan repayments	(14,883)	(14,311)
Net cash provided by investing activities	1,386,659	429,575

21. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash in hand and at bank	4,189,942	3,740,603

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22. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 September 2023 £	Cash flows £	At 31 August 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	3,740,603	449,339	4,189,942
Debt due within 1 year	(15,457)	-	(15,457)
Debt due after 1 year	(34,326)	15,456	(18,870)
	<u>3,690,820</u>	<u>464,795</u>	<u>4,155,615</u>

23. Capital commitments

	2024 £	2023 £
Contracted for but not provided in these financial statements		
CIF Projects	2,599,277	2,701,484
Schools for the Future Projects	68,345	-
	<u>2,667,622</u>	<u>2,701,484</u>

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24. Pension commitments

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

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

Contributions amounting to £Nil were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2024 (2023 - £88,164) and are included within creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

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

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

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £500,445 (2023 - £439,933).

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

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The Trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan. Accordingly, the 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 Trust has set out above, the information available on the scheme.

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24. Pension commitments (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £525,000 (2023 - £428,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £415,000 (2023 - £334,000) and employees' contributions totalled £ 110,000 (2023 - £94,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 22.1 per cent for employers and 5.5 - 12.5 per cent for employees.

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

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

At the year end 31 August 2024 the LGPS scheme had an asset per the actuarial report of £288,000 (2023: scheme liability of £47,000) as shown in the note below.

In accordance with FRS102, an entity shall recognise a plan surplus as a defined benefit plan asset only to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan. Since the Trust cannot request a refund of the contributions and cannot at this time confirm that there will be any reductions in future contributions payable to the scheme, the pension scheme asset has not been recognised within these financial statements and the pension scheme gain has only been recognised up to a scheme value of zero on the Balance Sheet.

Principal actuarial assumptions

	2024 %	2023 %
Rate of increase in salaries	3.8	3.9
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.8	2.9
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.1	5.3

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

	2024 Years	2023 Years
Retiring today		
Males	21.1	21.1
Females	23.9	23.9
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	22.1	22.1
Females	25.5	25.5

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24. Pension commitments (continued)

Sensitivity analysis

	2024 £000	2023 £000
Discount rate +0.1%	(122)	(104)
Discount rate -0.1%	126	107
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	163	136
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	(158)	(133)
CPI rate +0.1%	6	5
CPI rate -0.1%	(5)	(5)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Share of scheme assets

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

	At 31 August 2024 £	At 31 August 2023 £
Equities	3,645,000	3,154,000
Corporate bonds	1,058,000	902,000
Property	882,000	731,000
Cash and other liquid assets	294,000	193,000
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total market value of assets	<u>5,879,000</u>	<u>4,980,000</u>

The actual return on scheme assets was £628,000 (2023 - £190,000).

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Current service cost	338,000	(448,000)
Interest income	(279,000)	(248,000)
Interest cost	270,000	239,000
Administrative expenses	(5,000)	(8,000)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities	<u>324,000</u>	<u>(465,000)</u>

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24. Pension commitments (continued)

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	5,027,000	5,634,000
Current service cost	338,000	448,000
Interest cost	270,000	239,000
Employee contributions	110,000	94,000
Actuarial losses/(gains)	95,000	(1,257,000)
Benefits paid	39,000	(131,000)
At 31 August	<u>5,879,000</u>	<u>5,027,000</u>

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	4,980,000	5,681,000
Interest income	279,000	248,000
Actuarial gains/(losses)	61,000	(1,238,000)
Employer contributions	415,000	334,000
Employee contributions	110,000	94,000
Benefits paid	39,000	(131,000)
Administrative expenses	(5,000)	(8,000)
At 31 August	<u>5,879,000</u>	<u>4,980,000</u>

25. Operating lease commitments

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Not later than 1 year	10,570	10,769
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	11,533	14,137
	<u>22,103</u>	<u>24,906</u>

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26. Members' liability

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

27. Related party transactions

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

No related party transactions took place in the period of account (2023: none), other than certain Trustees' remuneration and expenses already disclosed in note 12.