Company registration number 07837770 (England and Wales)

THE EXCEL ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP

(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

THE EXCEL ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP

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THE EXCEL ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	
	S Hall
	A Hopgood
	K Cromarty
	M Fleming
	S Scott
	C Hillary
Trustees	A F Darnell
	R Warneford
	A J Hopgood (Vice Chair)
	Dr A Quidwai
	S E Hall (Chair of Trustees)
	D A J Rogers (Resigned 31 December 2024)
	V E Walton
	K Barrie (Appointed 21 March 2025)
	T Robertson (Appointed 21 March 2025)
Senior leadership team	
- Head Teacher	M Wright
- Interim Chief Operating Officer	W Pattison (Accounting Officer)
- Trust Director of Safeguarding	M Osbourne
- Deputy Head Teacher	L Mersh Roberts
- Deputy Head Teacher	H Machin
- Assistant Head Teacher	L Lutynski
- Assistant Head Teacher	F Ward
- Assistant Head Teacher	K O'Neill
Company registration number	07837770 (England and Wales)
Registered office	Newton Drive Durham DH1 5BQ United Kingdom
Independent auditor	Azets Audit Services Wynyard Park House Wynyard Avenue Wynyard TS22 5TB United Kingdom
Bankers	Lloyds Bank plc 19 Market Place Durham County Durham DH1 3NL United Kingdom

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Solicitors	Womble Bond Dickinson St Anns Wharf 112 Quayside Newcastle Upon Tyne Tyne And Wear NE1 3DX United Kingdom

The trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditor's report of the charitable company for the period 1st September 2024 –31st August 2025. The annual report serves the purposes of both a trustees' report, and a directors' report under company law. Please note, any reference in this document to the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) is to 31st March 2025 when it was disbanded and control absorbed back directly to the DFE (Department for Education) from 1st April 2025.

The trust operates an academy for pupils aged 11 -18 serving an extensive area around central Durham. It has a capacity of 1,330 and had a roll of approximately 1280 students. Recent years have seen a growth in student roll, though a reduction in sixth form numbers. The school is expected to grow to 1600 students over the coming years and permission has been given from the DFE and Regional Board to build the new school to assume this eventual cohort. The growth is expected to be gradual.

Structure, governance and management

Constitution

The academy trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents of the academy trust. The Directors of Excel Academy Partnership are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law.

The charitable company is known as The Excel Academy Partnership.

The trust was formed as a Multi-Academy Trust which has the infrastructure to govern a family of schools through Local Governing Boards. At present, the trust has responsibility for one secondary school, Framwellgate School Durham. Initial work undertaken to expand the trust with two additional schools from January 2025 identified concerns in alignment of values resulting in a change of direction. The Trust are concentrating on supporting a new head teacher in post at Framwellgate School Durham from September 2024, with the medium term aim still to expand at the right time, and with an exciting new build as the backdrop from September 2027. A lot of strategic discussions have taken place over the course of this last year, and a revisit of the governance review which concentrated on preparedness for growth. Articles have been updated to the most recent model and alongside this, and the appointment of an interim COO and CFO, the Trust is well prepared for expansion. Details of the trustees who served during the year are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 1.

Members' liability

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

Trustees' indemnities

The academy has purchased a risk management arrangement to protect trustees from claims arising against negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy business. This is included in the DfE RPA scheme.

Method of recruitment and appointment or election of trustees

The term of office for any Director shall be 4 years, save that this time limit shall not apply to the Headteacher or any post held ex officio. Subject to remaining eligible to be a particular type of Governor, any Governor may be re-appointed or re-elected. Any Chair or Vice Chair to any Board or Committee shall have a term of office of one year, which will be considered for re-election on an annual basis.

Recruitment of Trustees follows protocols outlined in the Standing Orders approved by the Board. When new Trustees are sought to fill a vacancy, the Chair and / or Vice Chair will meet with potential new Trustees alongside the interim COO prior to appointment. Recruitment exercises will explore channels as the Board thinks fit and in line with the terms of reference for the organisation. Having reached the conclusion of its deliberations regarding any particular vacancy, the Chair will present findings of discussions with potential new appointments to the Trust Board, including in confidence the names of those persons whom it has considered, and shall recommend the preferred nominee(s) for appointment. New appointments will be made in accordance with the Memorandum of Association.

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees

The training and induction provided for new trustees depends on their existing experience. Where necessary induction and training is provided on a range of subject areas including charity, educational, legal and financial matters. All new trustees are given the opportunity to tour the academy and the chance to meet with staff and students. All trustees are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role. The Trust has a developed governance training programme, in line with work also undertaken by the Local Governing Board. This has taken account of skills, and knowledge gaps. The Local Governing Board and Trust undertook a skills audit and have a targeted training schedule in place which will help to address any gaps in knowledge. A further independent review is underway of Governance at EAP as part of a wider review for the Trust including the implementation of an operating model which will support the Trust and Framwellgate School Durham making necessary improvements ready for opening of the new build in September 2027. More details around governance, skills and training are available on the dedicated governance page on the school website at. Training over recent years has included financial management, teaching and learning and curriculum based sessions, and will be refreshed as and when necessary to ensure Trustees and Governors are up to date with relevant information to allow them to successfully discharge their duties.

Organisational structure

The governance and leadership structure within the Academy Trust is consistent with the requirements by law and recommendations in the Academy Trust Handbook and all other relevant guidance. The Members of the Academy are the guardians of the governance of the Trust. They are responsible for high level monitoring of the Trust and in their general hands off role will only intervene where there are significant concerns about the running of the Academy by Trustees.

The Trust Board is responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the Trust in accordance with the provisions set out in the memorandum and articles of association. They ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction and hold the executive to account.

The Board is responsible for all matters including educational performance, health and safety, financial performance, risk management, employment issues, safeguarding and overall compliance with all relevant laws, legislation, regulations and guidance. The Trust Board has two Board level committees to support in their role of scrutiny and challenge. Further work is being undertaken early in 2025-26 to further streamline governance ensuring support and challenge is targeted and effective.

The Personnel committee considers anything relating to employment of staff and the audit committee is responsible for all financial and risk related matters.

The Local Governing Board is a committee of the Trust Board and, once an operational multi academy trust with a family of schools, an LGB will exist for each school undertaking due diligence through its work as directed by the Trust Board, and through powers of delegation, in order to provide appropriate assurance.

The Scheme of Delegation is agreed by the Trust Board in order to ensure it is able to discharge its duties across all areas of responsibility. The Scheme of Delegation and supporting terms of reference and standing orders are reviewed at least annually to ensure they remain effective, up to date and relevant. Furthermore, the Trust Board operates a policy management schedule which ensures correct delegation of duties allowing policies and procedures to be updated and considered in the most appropriate way.

The Interim COO, CFO and the Trust Director of Safeguarding are responsible for supporting the Academy Trust at an executive level, implementing policies laid down by the trustees and reporting back to them.

The Board has worked hard over the last few years to maximise separation of duties across the governance structure and as the Article of Association have now been updated to the latest version in advance of becoming an expanded Trust, further work has been done in readiness for this eventuality.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel
Pay is determined in line with the Academy's pay policy which is reviewed and ratified annually by the Personnel Committee of the Trust Board. The pay policy for teaching and leadership staff complies with Teachers' Pay and Conditions, and performance related increments are based on successful performance achieved through the application of the Academy appraisal system. Support staff pay has already undergone a thorough job evaluation process, with any new positions or significant changes to roles mid year being job evaluated to ensure consistency of grade and responsibility. Support staff pay, including for senior leadership posts, is applied in line with Green Book pay and conditions, and is not performance related. The Academy does not pay governors or trustees.

Trade union facility time
Under the provisions of the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2018, where an academy trust has more than 49 full time equivalent employees throughout any 7 months within the reporting period, it must include information included in Schedule 2 of the Regulations. The Excel Academy Partnership did not employ any union officials who undertook official union duties during 2024-25. As a result there is no cost or time associated with such responsibilities during the financial year.

Related parties and other connected charities and organisations
There are no related parties or other connected charities or organisations linked with Framwellgate School Durham.

All details are stated in note 22 to the Financial Statements.

Objectives and activities

Objects and aims
The principal object and activity of the charitable company is the operation of Framwellgate School Durham to provide education for students of all abilities between the ages of 11 and 18.

In accordance with the articles of association the charitable company has adopted a 'Scheme of Government' approved by the Secretary of State for Education. The Scheme of Government specifies, amongst other things, the basis for admitting students to the Academy, the catchment area from which the students are drawn, and that the curriculum should comply with the substance of the national curriculum.

Objectives, strategies and activities
In November 2024 Framwellgate School Durham had a Section 5 inspection, resulting in the following judgement:

Quality of Education: Requires Improvement
Behaviour and Attitudes: Good
Personal Development: Good
Leadership and Management: Required Improvement
Sixth Form Provision: Good

This supported the new Head teacher in an early assessment of provision in his tenure, and supported the development of a targeted School Improvement Plan to address the required areas for improvement namely:

- Curriculum improvement ensuring consistency across all subject areas including use of assessment to ensure all students know more and achieve more;
- SEND provision improvement to ensure the curriculum is adapted for all students with SEND to ensure they are supported consistently.
- Improvements needed in reading provision for all learners, with focus in particular on the weakest readers.

In order to address the areas needed for improvement, a number of actions have already been taken, with some ready to implement for September 2025:

1. Assess, don't assume.
Teachers should ensure that every learner's understanding is checked to aid their progress and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of the learners in the room. When assessment reveals a lack of understanding or misconceptions teaching staff will respond appropriately with precision and speed. This will be measured through whole school and departmental quality assurance, student voice and student outcomes.

2. Attendance is everyone's business
Everyone has a role in ensuring high levels of attendance and creating in students a sense of belonging. The school will continue to develop a whole school culture that places a premium on student engagement with school and increased attendance with every staff member being clear about their role in this process and each student feeling that they are known and valued. This will be measured through attendance data, staff and student voice.

3. A behaviour culture that ensures everyone is able to learn and achieve.
Students thrive when there is consistency across the school. The school culture will promote celebration of student success as well as the consistent application of sanctions where needed so students thrive in a predictable atmosphere. This will be measured through behaviour data, staff and student voice.

4. Review of whole school curriculum offer with subsequent implementation of any changes needed.
Review of whole school curriculum to ensure it reflects our values and maximises student engagement and success within school while preparing them for adulthood. This will be measured by the completion and presentation of the review initially.

1. To develop the Quality Assurance of SEND provision so that its effectiveness and impact are consistently monitored and that all staff are given appropriate training in key aspects of Quality First Teaching.

2. To develop the nature of reading interventions to ensure that all students receive timely and effective interventions if their reading is judged to be below standard and that the impact of this is monitored effectively.

3. To improve attendance for Years 7-13 in a sustainable fashion – Target Two is a development of this original target.

4. To take active steps to reduce bullying and ensure students are confident in who they would report any instances of bullying to and the importance of doing so.

5. To review the school rewards system, make any necessary adjustments and the quality assure its consistent application.

6. To improve communication and staff wellbeing across the school.

7. To improve communication with the wider community.

8. To develop and implement robust Quality Assurance methods for all areas of school life so that leaders are confident in their understanding of the school and the areas for development.

Contextual Data
Students on Roll

- The school roll is on or around PAN except for Y11 (16 below). There have been no significant changes to PAN this year and the roll is stable.
- The October census has 1243 students in total recorded as being on roll.
- The outgoing Year 11 (209) will be replaced by 225 joining Year 7 in September 2025.
- The long-term trend for student numbers remains positive, with the LA requesting an expansion of the school to 1600. This will take time to achieve and PAN is scheduled to remain at 225 for 2025 and 2026.
- The number of first choice applications for September 2025 remains positive in line with previous years.
- Sixth form numbers remain a concern, with 141 in 2024-25 and an expected reduction to around 120 in 2025-26 in line with the smaller outgoing Year 11.

The academy's main objectives continue to be encompassed in its mission statement which is:

Excellence, compassion and respect for all
"Our school promotes academic excellence and embraces the shared values of honesty, integrity, respect and compassion. We want our students to be ambitious, kind, resilient and hardworking, and have a genuine passion for learning. We want them to change the world with the knowledge, skills and confidence they have learned here; to champion fairness, build friendships for life, and have pride in our school. Above all, we want our students to be happy."

Leadership Structure and capacity
This year saw the appointment of a new Head teacher from September and in internal restructure with interim Chief Operating Officer and Interim Chief financial officer realignment. This will allow the trust to support the school in making necessary improvements whilst preparing for a brand new building in September 2027 and future expansion once the time is right. Across this period the school will embed a newly realigned Senior Leadership Team, extended leadership team, and undertake a thorough governance model review.

New school website
Early in the academic year a new school website was designed and reviewed with a much cleaner brand making the information to site visitors more accessible. The Head teacher has also ensured a strong communication strategy with parents through a weekly letter. This has been received well in the school community.

https://framdurham.com

Staffing
The new academic year saw a significant reduction in staff turnover, and no vacant positions as we head into 2025-26. This is a real positive with some exciting new appointments in to position. The Head teacher has brought in a real focus on staff wellbeing, implementing half termly staff surveys which include the opportunity for thanks to staff. The Head teacher offers public praise and thanks to staff on a regular basis, and again this has been received positively.

Public benefit
The academy's aims and achievements are set out within this report and have been undertaken to further its charitable purposes for the public benefit. The trustees have complied with the duty under Section 4of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the trustees have considered this guidance in deciding what activities the academy should undertake

Strategic report

Achievements and performance
A Level results 2025
GCSE results 2025

A Level outcomes for 2025/26 were higher than in the previous years with the average A Level grade being C+ compared to C-, and a positive value added of 0.25 (which will be validated in the Autumn term). There is the potential for improvement to an average B grade with 1 or 2 remarks.

At GCSE level, the headline attainment figures are in line with 2024-25. Attainment 8 figure currently sits at 45.28 compared to 48.01 last year. However there is no progress measure for this year group as they didn't sit SATs due to the pandemic so comparing their overall attainment to another year group isn't completely valid. Our internal data suggests a similar level of progress to last year, i.e. around 0.

Key performance indicators
To ensure our ongoing success and improvement, key performance indicators continue to include regular reporting through senior leadership teams, the governing board, and the Trust Board, underpinned by a well-structured meetings schedule.
The bespoke monthly finance outturn package developed by the academy continues to include all income and expenditure to date, alongside forecasts through to year end, incorporating all accruals and prepayments. This enables regular reporting on the current and projected financial health of the academy, and the opportunity to analyse variances against budget headings.

The management accounts presented to Trustees each month include all requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook, together with a range of KPIs. Our accounts are circulated monthly to all Trustees and discussed at both Audit and Trust Board meetings, and include:

- a breakdown of income from all income streams, including by
- a breakdown of expenditure, including by %
- a variance report
- cash flow
- balance sheet
- reserves
- a breakdown of employee costs across all staffing-related expenditure, by %
- a monthly benchmarking report on any areas Trustees wish to review in light of variances or concems against budget. In 2025–26, this has again included detailed reporting on energy costs and absence/supply costs, but remains flexible to adapt to emerging priorities.

This approach has continued to support the academy when benchmarking against other establishments. To strengthen benchmarking activities, the COO/CFO have also undertaken further analysis of key budget areas. The external report provided by Azets was circulated to Trustees for information and discussion, and was considered in detail by both the Audit Committee and the full Trust Board.

Framwellgate School Durham remains full, though numbers within the sixth form continue to face pressures due to significant local competition. Forecasting remains a key priority, ensuring plans account for prudent worst-case scenarios while maintaining ambition for growth and improvement.

Trustees regularly review student numbers and the impact on future funding, with projections modelled over several years. This has supported informed decision-making with an understanding of the longer-term financial implications of choices made today.

Senior leaders and Trustees continue to review teacher salaries annually against performance and progress against expectations, with recommendations for progression considered via the Personnel Committee. Support staff salaries remain subject to job evaluation prior to appointment, and mid-year evaluations are undertaken if roles undergo significant change, ensuring consistency of grading and responsibility levels.

Staff attendance is closely monitored each month, with the academy's attendance management policy applied consistently. This ensures that attendance is managed effectively, while individuals receive appropriate support. The sickness insurance policy remains in place, providing additional security. The decision to continue with SAS sickness insurance for staff absences in 2024-25 has proved beneficial, as long term absence levels have increased, resulting in significant insurance returns therefore supporting the financial position of the academy.

The monitoring of student progress, attainment, and attendance continues to be rigorous. Senior leaders and governors undertake regular reviews, with findings routinely escalated to the Trust Board for oversight and discussion. The Trust Board now take a more leading role in challenge and scrutiny of school performance which was an action which came out of governance reviews. This is a positive step forward, and one which will continue as we move into 2025-26.

Internal audit activity during 2025–26 again confirmed very strong practice, with only minor issues identified. The overall judgement of our systems and practices is "Substantial" which is testament to a very strong back office team. Areas assessed were: Governance, Financial Planning, Budgetary control, Income and Expenditure Management, Month End procedures, Data and IT security, Business Continuity and Premises Management. Audits are planned in line with the risk management plan, scrutinised regularly by the Audit Committee and ratified annually by the Board.

The academy continues to embed the Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP) model into budget-setting and curriculum planning. This work is led by the Headteacher, the Chief Operating Officer (Accounting Officer), and supported by the Interim Chief Financial Officer. Outcomes are reviewed and challenged through the Audit Committee before being presented to the Trust Board.

The Trust Board also makes use of the School Resource Management Toolkit to benchmark curriculum and financial efficiency against national standards. The 2025–26 review once again highlighted that the academy operates on a lean and effective model. Trustees will continue to review this toolkit annually to ensure resources remain well-directed and sustainable. Interestingly, the average cost per lesson is circa £4,200, which also demonstrates how much the academy financially has to support the sixth form provision.

Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the board of trustees has a reasonable expectation that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence in the medium term. 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. The Trustees completed a questionnaire to allow them to consider this judgement, also considering the high level of investments we are now making, and the likely annual financial return of circa £50k.

Financial review

Most of the academy's income is obtained from the Department of education (DfE) via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in the form of recurrent grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received from the DfE/ESFA during the year ended 31 August 2025 and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The academy also receives grants for fixed assets from the DfE/ESFA. In accordance with The Charities Statement of Recommended practice, 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' (SORP 2019), such grants are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities as restricted income in the fixed asset fund. The restricted fixed asset fund balance is reduced by annual depreciation charges over the expected useful life of the assets concerned.

In addition the school generates funding from the use of its own resources such as the use of the Sjovoll Centre, lettings, and working in partnership with other Education providers in the delivery of some training programmes and supporting students on teacher training courses. The lettings income returned to pre-pandemic levels for both the Sjovoll Centre, Sports Centre and playing fields during the previous years and has maintained this, and is likely to continue to grow though could be impacted by the new build programme when this starts later in 2025-26.

The Academy was awarded a new build during the summer term of 2022 and CIF projects were therefore pulled subject to further discussion with the DFE which would only be needed at times of significant concern about the buildings. It is the Trust Board's responsibility to carefully measure the risk of the grounds and buildings and ensure areas of concern are highlighted and included in a Capital investment plan. Given the new build announcement, it is important to not waste public funding on a building and grounds which will be demolished in the coming 3 years (most likely). However this needs to be balanced with the need to consider the responsibilities of the Trust around good estates safety and management ensuring funds are allocated to areas of need to prevent and respond to areas of concern. The Trust is responsible for ongoing compliance with statutory duties to ensure the health and safety of everyone on site and in the buildings. Funds are allocated accordingly understanding where needs are greatest. As the new building programme has been slow progress across the year, the risk of building failure has increased and is reflected in the risk management plan.

It is now expected that the new build will be handed over for opening in September 2027. This is disappointing however huge progress has been made in relation to designs and dealing with significant site issues including protected wildlife, poor drainage, coal seams and significant areas of peat on the land.

During the year ended 31 August 2025, total expenditure of £10,133,218 (excluding depreciation and the LGPS adjustments) was less than recurrent grant funding from the DfE/ESFA together with other incoming resources. The excess of income over expenditure for the year (before transfers and actuarial gains) was £233,492.

All of the expenditure shown in the Statement of Financial Activities in furtherance of the academies objectives.
At 31 August 2025 the net book value of fixed assets was £5,800,901 and movements in tangible fixed assets are shown in note 12 to the Financial Statements. The assets were used exclusively for providing education and the associated support services to the students of the academy.

The provisions of FRS102 have been applied in full, resulting in an asset of £1,098,000, which has not been recognised on the balance sheet.

The academy held fund balances at 31 August 2025 of £2,506,407 compromising £1,661,346 of restricted funds and £845,061 of unrestricted funds.

Reserves policy

The academy holds restricted and unrestricted funds (the attached financial statements detail these funds). Unrestricted funds are held:

- to support the new build project with £1m earmarked by the trust for spend on new furniture and a possible investment into a 3G pitch.
- to support the maintenance and repair of an aging building to the point of new build
- to support the academy's risk management action plan
- to support disaster recovery plan
- to cover urgent purchases / emergencies
- to provide funds which can be designated to specific areas to support priorities in the school
- to cover ongoing costs in relation to the running of the academy including infrastructure and IT upgrades
- to support emerging priorities across the course of an academic year
- to support families who are in need of financial support
- to support students to access activities in enrichment week and on offer throughout the school year
- to increase capacity within the Academy to support other schools in an operational MAT
- to cover late announcements over no more than a one year period for such areas as unfunded pay awards

In the short term, this is considered sufficient to cover:
a) unplanned activities
b) emergency repairs/maintenance
c) longer term financial planning
d) a salary safety net
e) student number fluctuation
f) a release of staffing capacity to respond to emerging MAT expansion priorities

The academy's current level of free reserves are in surplus by £845,061 and are deemed to meet the ideal level of reserves required for the ongoing needs of the academy.

The academy set a balanced budget in 2024-25 with a small expected surplus for contingencies. During the year, despite challenges (mainly external) which applied pressure to the budget, the target has been achieved. The trustees continue to consider additional activities related to the academy's objectives to which excess reserves may be achieved by:

a) seeking to make savings from non-salary areas wherever possible
b) seeking to achieve additional income through use of school staff to deliver training across the region and to support students in their teacher training years.
c) ensuring that budget planning and curriculum design processes are integrated
d) maximising lettings opportunities using all available space
e) striving to secure value for money in all purchases
f) reviewing contracts regularly to demand value for money
g) reviewing benchmarking analysis with Trustees to identify any areas of surprise which require additional investigation
h) identifying areas for additional scrutiny linking the risk management plan with the internal audit programme
i) accurately reviewing risks to ensure funds are targeted appropriately when budget setting

The level of reserves is reviewed by the trustees regularly throughout the year. The minimum level of reserves for the ongoing needs of the academy is reviewed by the trustees on an annual basis. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the levels of uninsurable risk. In 2024-25 the trustees considered it prudent to hold unrestricted reserves in the general fund in the form of free reserves (total funds less the amount held in fixed assets and restricted funds) of a minimum of 5% of the total budget allocation. Trustees resolved to continue to strive for a minimum 5% of the total budget allocation as a reasonable reserve policy, being mindful that the funding received is to support the education of our students as our core aim.

Trustees have agreed to increase the ringfenced funds for the new build from £600k to £1m. This still leaves reserves at a level above the minimum policy amount, it recognises the increasing cost pressures places on schools, and lessons learned from other schools who have come through similar projects.

Investment policy
If free funds were available, the academy may invest surplus funds through money market accounts. Interest rates would be reviewed prior to each investment. This policy maximises investment return whilst minimising risks to the principal sum. The Academy has invested funds within the last financial year, which has proven fruitful for the Academy with an annual expected return of circa £50k. This inclused a "creaming" account where funds overnight move to a higher interest account leaving a safety net. This alone should return around £14k per annum from the Million pounds invested on a rolling programme overall.

Principal risks and uncertainties
An ongoing risk remains around the uncertainties around potentially unfunded national pay awards. This seems to be an increasing issue with recent Government announcements suggesting future will awards will need to be met from within school budgets.

The timings of pay awards are unhelpful and historically late for schools to plan effectively and in an timely fashion. Improvements were seen during the year, however remain not ideal when schools are striving for accuracy when planning ahead.

In addition the academy is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which results in the recognition of a significant deficit on the academy balance sheet.

During 2024-25 energy costs remained high, though have reduced from the previous 2 years. This remains a very significant cost to the Academy primarily due to the age and nature of the buildings. Trustees continued to receive detailed reporting on energy costs, with benchmarking against both the previous year and national trends. While prices showed some signs of stabilisation compared to 2023–24, energy remains a significant budget pressure, and efficiency measures such as LED lighting have been introduced to mitigate impact. The new build, being carbon net zero and with ground source heat pumps, should return some reduced costs as we move into September 2027.

The Academy was hit with a significant cyber attack in September 2023, resulting in a data breach. Since then significant work has been undertaken, and continues, supported through experts from the North East Business Resilience Centre, a police lead organisation, to ensure the network is secure. The Trust have commissioned an annual vulnerability assessment which will help to mitigate future risk, and has secured Cyber Essentials which is a requirement of the RPA cyber policy. The recent vulnerability assessment showed ongoing vulnerabilities, managed internally but which need to be addressed by moving off a VPN system and migrating to a cloud based system for SIMS. This needs to be a priority. The COO has undertaken significant outreach work with the NEBRC to support schools locally and nationally through speaking at relevant conferences and events to share "lessons learned".

The trustees have assessed the major risks, to which the academy is exposed, in particular those relating specifically to infrastructure, teaching, provision of facilities and other operational areas of the academy, and its finances. The trustees have implemented a number of systems to assess risks that the school faces, especially in the operational areas (e.g. in relation to teaching, health and safety, bullying and school visits) and in relation to the control of finance. Where significant financial risks remain the academy has ensured they have adequate risk protection arrangements, procured through the DfE RPA scheme. The academy has an effective system of internal financial controls and this is explained in more detail in the Governance Statement.

Now that the academy has a steady student roll it is financially secure and will remain so over the foreseeable future should government funding rise at 5% over the coming two years as a minimum. The caveat to this is the sustainability of the sixth form provision given the drop in students numbers and the resulting lagged impact on school funds.

The academy has fully implemented the requirements of the Safer Recruitment procedures and all key staff have received training in this area. In addition all staff have received training on all key Safeguarding and Child Protection areas including Prevent Strategy, CSE's, safer working practices, Keeping Children Safe in Education as well as GDPR. The Academy supplements external training provision with its own bite size online training undertaken by all necessary staff.

Fundraising

The students at Framwellgate School Durham are proactive in organising and undertaking fundraising activities to support local Charities and good causes. These range from non-uniform days, to undertaking bake sales. The fundraising is done at a local level, without the engagement of external consultants or fundraising professionals and is very much led by our students who achieved great success, raising funds to support local causes. The scope of any such fundraising activities is restricted to within school and to students' close families and friends who are very generous. As a result, the Academy has received no complaints in relation to fundraising, and instead only positive comments.

This year funds have been raised by our students for:

- Breast Cancer Now £193
- Wear Red Now £382
- Cancer Research £80
- International Womans Day £80
- Business beats Cancer (Enterprise Fundraiser) £1966

We also raised :

- Fram Food for Families @ £1594
- Fram Hardship Fund @ £90

As well as monetary donations our very generous families and community have donated clothing and uniforms as well as food parcels which many families have benefitted from.
There are no specific benefactors that we have a regular commitment to.

Plans for future periods

A big opportunity for excitement at the Academy is the involvement in the new build project which will see a carbon net zero, state of the art, brand new school on our site by September 2027. We hope we will also be able to secure a 3G sports pitch to be used for our students and the local and wider community. Although this has been slow progress due to external factors, this remains an exciting project which should accelerate during this financial year, with work hopefully commencing on the land in November.

The Trust expansion planned for January 2025 did not materialise due to several factors, but allowing the Trust to support the school and new head teacher in implementing a new school improvement strategy. The Trust is very keen to expand at the right time, and with the right partners to ensure values are closed aligned for the benefit for all students.

The Interim COO has qualified as AAT level 4 which is an excellent achievement, and the Finance Officer is also undertaking accountancy qualifications to further enhance her skills. Systems are being developed and improved upon with a departmental aim of providing a centre of excellence for financial management which would benefit schools joining the Trust in the future.

Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR)
The Trust exceeds the 40,000 kWh threshold under the 2018 Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) Regulations and therefore reports its UK energy use.

2025–26 energy consumption
Electricity: 500,000 kWh
Gas: 1,600,000 kWh (includes 700,000 kWh currently under dispute)
Total: 2,100,000 kWh
Intensity ratio
kWh per pupil: ~1,690 kWh/pupil
Calculation: 2,100,000 kWh ÷ 1,243 pupils = 1,689.46 kWh/pupil (rounded)

For transparency, excluding the disputed gas readings would give a total of 1,400,000 kWh, equivalent to ~1,126 kWh/pupil (1,400,000 ÷ 1,243).

Energy management
Trustees receive monthly energy data within the management accounts. During the year we focused on practical efficiency actions (e.g. ongoing LED replacements, tighter heating controls, tariff reviews, staff education) and will continue to monitor consumption and costs as part of our financial and risk oversight.

Auditor

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

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

A resolution proposing that Azets Audit Services be reappointed as auditor of the charitable company will be put to the members.

The trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 12 December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

S E Hall
Chair of Trustees

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

Scope of responsibility

As trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that The Excel Academy Partnership 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 Guide.

The board of trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Interim Chief Operating Officer, as accounting officer for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between the 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 has formally met 5 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the board of trustees was as follows:

Trustees	Meetings attended	Out of possible
A F Darnell	5	5
R Warneford	3	5
A J Hopgood (Vice Chair)	4	5
Dr A Quidwai	1	5
S E Hall (Chair of Trustees)	5	5
D A J Rogers (Resigned 31 December 2024)	0	3
V E Walton	5	5
K Barrie (Appointed 21 March 2025)	1	2
T Robertson (Appointed 21 March 2025)	2	2

There is distinct separation of roles throughout layers of governance at all levels (Members, Trustees and Local Governors). Additional members were appointed during 2022-23 ensuring that there is significant separation from Trustees. Further work has been undertaken during 2024-25 considering the expansion of the Trust. Further work is planned to recruit more trustees, and to realign responsibilities throughout layers of governance to support the Trust in discharging its duties.

Skills audits have been undertaken by our Local Governors and Trustees in order to identify gaps in knowledge. Governors have attended training courses throughout the year to strengthen knowledge in key areas (safeguarding, curriculum, finance etc.). Training is provided via membership with the NGA and supported by the governor training programme available via Durham County Council and Stockton Council through the Governance Professional support. The results of this work categorically reflect that every member of the Governing Board and Trust Board is fully committed to supporting each other, the Head teacher, COO and senior leadership team in driving school improvement, expanding the Trust, managing risk, and improving outcomes for students.

Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest are managed through maintaining an up-to-date and complete register of business and pecuniary interests of all Trustees, Members, Governors and Senior Executives. These interests are updated on a meeting by meeting basis and are recorded on a register which is visible on the Academy Website. Internal and External audits monitor all areas of expenditure and assess any potential conflicts. At all times the Academy avoids any related party transactions as this register is also kept locally and referred to as and when needed. The Academy has no ownership or control of any subsidiaries, joint ventures or associates.

Although the Academy enters into no related party transactions, key personnel are fully aware of the requirements of the ATH and how to request and report on these, including the £2,500 limit over which goods/services must be provided at cost.

Audit Commitee

The Audit Committee is a sub-committee of the main board of trustees. Its purpose is to operate as a sub committee of the Trust Board, to deal with finance, audit and assurance matters. The committee has an experienced and knowledgeable Chair, who is proactive in supporting the Academy and key personnel in matters including financial management, risk management and internal assurance.

There were 3 meetings scheduled for the year.

Trustees	Meetings attended	Out of possible
R Warneford	2	3
A J Hopgood (Vice Chair)	3	3
D A J Rogers (Resigned 31 December 2024)	0	3
V E Walton	3	3

Review of value for money
As Accounting Officer the Interim COO has responsibility for ensuring that the academy trust delivers good value in 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 taxpayers 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 available. The Accounting Officer for the academy trust has delivered improved value for money during the year as detailed below:

The school has endeavoured to develop an efficient curriculum over the last five years. The cost per lesson is £4,200 which shows a lean model, those does identify how much the school subsidises sixth form provision. Curriculum analysis is undertaken on an annual basis to ensure that staffing ratios, contact time and class sizes are managed effectively.

During 2024-25 the school was provided with a pupil premium allocation of circa £300k. This funding was utilised to target a number of interventions to support pupils who had triggered the grant funding, including a particular focus on attendance and narrowing the attainment gap. This remains a key priority moving forward in the school improvement plan. Work has been done to better track access to all activities, including extra curricular activities, by students eligible for PP funding. 2024-25 results show a lot of work is still needed to support our most deprived students in order to narrow the gap, however there is a significant national problem around attendance of these children which means if they are not in school, their achievements will be naturally stinted. This work continues with a big focus on attendance across school, but also targeting these children.

Funds are allocated year on year to ensure the building and site remain safe. The Academy is proficient in securing value for money and maximises Local Authority and Consortia arrangements where these prove efficient and cost effective. Funds allocated are funds needed to ensure the site is maintained, and all compliance related checks are budgeted for and undertaken such as Health and Safety audits; electrical inspections; annual fire panel and alarms checks; monthly legionella checks; gas tightness testing; servicing of kitchen equipment; annual sports equipment inspections and DT equipment testing.

We also have one lift, placed in the Sports Centre, which is checked twicer per year. General buildings and site maintenance is undertaken proactively by the site team lead by the site manager and using external contractors where necessary. PAT testing is undertaken on a rolling basis by the trained DT technician. Asbestos monitoring is undertaken through Durham County Council on the Trust's behalf, twice a year given the high levels of asbestos managed in such old buildings. Any building work undertaken throughout the year incorporates asbestos checks where relevant. All external contractors are made to read and sign the asbestos register prior to commencing any works. The Sjovoll Centre is managed in exactly the same way with all checks and measures planned and funded through the budget.

Funds are now also allocated for an annual cyber vulnerability assessment, based on lessons learned.

A contract review is undertaken each year and regular meetings are held with the procurement and energy teams in to ascertain savings wherever possible.

The purpose of the system of internal control
The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of academy trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively, efficiently and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Excel Academy Partnership for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to handle risk

The board of trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the academy trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The board of trustees is of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 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 Interim COO and Trustees have developed a system of risk management which has been deemed as best practice by the internal auditor, and drives the internal audit programme to provide Trustees with the assurance it needs across all key business and finance related areas.

The risk and control framework

The academy trust's system of internal 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 regular financial reports
- A three year budget forecast taking account of projected student numbers
- Regular reviews by the audit committee of reports which indicate financial performance
- Monthly management accounts including KPI's which are circulated to all Trustees on a monthly basis
- Additional relevant monthly reports of interest to Trustees including detailed benchmarking analysis
- Clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties
- Identification and management of risks (current and emerging)
- Scoping and implementation of new requirements in key and emerging areas including lessons learned
- Regular reference by the Trust Board/Audit Committee to the Academy Trust Handbook
- Integrated curriculum and financial planning, and scrutiny of key performance indicators.

The board of trustees has considered the need for a specific internal control function and has decided:

- To appoint JGT auditors, to undertake an internal audit process for the Trust
- The audit committee will work with the CFO and internal auditor to agree the focus of each internal audit visit.
- To commission, where deemed relevant, deep dives linked closely to the risk management action plan to provide Trustees with assurance in all key areas

The internal audit role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the academy trusts financial systems. In particular the checks carried out in the current period included:

Area Reviewed	Assurance Rating	Improvement Action Identified
Governance	Substantial	No
Financial Planning	Substantial	No
Budgetary Control	Substantial	No
Income Management	Substantial	Yes
Expenditure Management	Substantial	No
Month-End Accounting Procedures	Substantial	No
Data / IT Security	Substantial	No
Business Continuity	Substantial	No
Premises Maintenance	Substantial	No

All checks are done and outcomes measured against the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook and any other statutory guides. On a termly basis the internal auditor provides a report to the board of trustees, through the audit committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the board of trustees' financial responsibilities. A summary report has also been produced in liaison with the Audit Committee and Trust Board in line with the requirement of the Academy Trust Handbook. This summary report will be uploaded to the DFE.

During the year the Academy Trust Internal Audit process has been fully delivered in line with the DFE's requirements, as dictated by the regulations in the Acaemy Trust Handbook.

The Internal Auditor has delivered the schedule of work as planned and no material control issues have arisen as a result of their work. No significant issues were identified in any of the audits undertaken.

Review of effectiveness

As Accounting Officer the Interim COO 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 external auditor
- The work of the senior leaders responsible for financial management and control
- The work of trustees, through the audit committee, in holding senior leaders to account and supporting financial management in the academy
- The School resource management self assessment process
- The work of the internal auditor
- The work of the Finance team within the academy trust who have responsibility for the management of the financial systems and processes
- Correspondence from DfE e.g. financial notice to improve/notice to improve (FNtI/NtI) and 'minded to' letters.

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the audit committee and ensures continuous improvement of the system in place.

Conclusion

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

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 12 December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

S E Hall	W Pattison
Chair of Trustees	**Accounting Officer**

STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

As accounting officer of The Excel Academy Partnership, I confirm that I have had due regard to the framework of authorities governing regularity, propriety and compliance, including the trust's funding agreement with the Department for Education (DfE), and the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook, including responsibilities for estates safety and management. I have also considered my responsibility to notify the academy trust board of trustees and DfE of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding, including 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 academy trust, or material non-compliance with the framework of authorities.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or 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 DfE.

W Pattison
Accounting Officer

12 December 2025

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

The trustees (who are also the directors of The Excel Academy Partnership for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025 published by the Department for Education, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

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

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; 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 that grants received from ESFA/DfE have been applied for the purposes intended.

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

Approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on 12 December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

S E Hall
Chair of Trustees

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE EXCEL ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Excel Academy Partnership for the year ended 31 August 2025 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025 issued by the Department for Education.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 August 2025 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;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's 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.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the trustees' report including the incorporated strategic report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the trustees' report including the incorporated strategic report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the academy trust and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' report, including the incorporated strategic report.

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

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

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE EXCEL ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the entity through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance
- Reviewing internal audit reports
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

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 of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

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

Use of our report

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

Azets Audit Services

Graham Fitzgerald BA FCA DChA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Azets Audit Services, Statutory Auditor

Wynyard Park House
Wynyard Avenue
Wynyard
TS22 5TB
United Kingdom

Date: 12/12/2025

INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT ON REGULARITY TO THE EXCEL ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 9 October 2025 and further to the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) as included in the extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Academy Trusts, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether anything has come to our attention that would suggest, in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received by The Excel Academy Partnership during the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 have not been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Respective responsibilities of the accounting officer of The Excel Academy Partnership and the reporting accountant

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of The Excel Academy Partnership's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education and the Academy Trust Handbook, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance, and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Academy Trusts. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 have not been applied for the 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 the DfE, which requires a limited assurance engagement as set out in our engagement letter.

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

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

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

INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT ON REGULARITY TO THE EXCEL ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- completion of self assessment questionnaire by Accounting Officer
- discussions with the Accounting Officer and finance team
- review of Internal Assurance reports
- review of trustee and committee meeting minutes
- review of finance and other relevant policies
- review of purchases, expenses and expense claims on a sample basis including the application of controls and tendering processes where applicable
- review of gifts and hospitality transactions including the application of controls
- review of credit and debit card transactions including the application of controls
- review of payroll transactions on a sample bases including the application of controls
- review of potential special payments to staff
- review of leases and consideration of areas where borrowing may have been incurred
- consideration of transactions with related and connected parties
- review of register of business interests for completeness and compliance with regulations
- enquiries into transactions that may require disclosure under DfE delegated authority rules
- consideration of value for money and appropriateness of transactions

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 has not been applied for the purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Azets Audit Services

Reporting Accountant
Azets Audit Services

Date: 12/12/2025

THE EXCEL ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds: General £	Fixed asset £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and capital grants	3	-	-	26,314	26,314	27,077
Charitable activities:						
- Funding for educational operations	4	398,039	9,376,639	-	9,774,678	9,619,129
Other trading activities	5	551,912	-	-	551,912	553,111
Investments	6	40,120	-	-	40,120	336
Total		990,071	9,376,639	26,314	10,393,024	10,199,653
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	7	427,762	5,798	-	433,560	127,933
Charitable activities:						
- Educational operations	8	398,039	9,250,619	772,810	10,421,468	10,361,157
Total	7	825,801	9,256,417	772,810	10,855,028	10,489,090
Net income/(expenditure)		164,270	120,222	(746,496)	(462,004)	(289,437)
Transfers between funds	17	-	(120,781)	120,781	-	-
Other recognised gains/(losses)						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	19	-	1,193,000	-	1,193,000	176,000
Adjustment for restriction on pension assets	19	-	(1,098,000)	-	(1,098,000)	-
Net movement in funds		164,270	94,441	(625,715)	(367,004)	(113,437)
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		680,791	1,566,905	6,331,537	8,579,233	8,692,670
Total funds carried forward		845,061	1,661,346	5,705,822	8,212,229	8,579,233

THE EXCEL ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

Comparative year information Year ended 31 August 2024	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds: General £	 Fixed asset £	Total 2024 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and capital grants	3	-	-	27,077	27,077
Charitable activities:					
- Funding for educational operations	4	382,732	9,236,397	-	9,619,129
Other trading activities	5	553,111	-	-	553,111
Investments	6	336	-	-	336
Total		936,179	9,236,397	27,077	10,199,653
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7	122,052	5,881	-	127,933
Charitable activities:					
- Educational operations	8	757,852	8,867,663	735,642	10,361,157
Total	7	879,904	8,873,544	735,642	10,489,090
Net income/(expenditure)		56,275	362,853	(708,565)	(289,437)
Transfers between funds	17	-	(77,801)	77,801	-
Other recognised gains/(losses)					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	19	-	176,000	-	176,000
Net movement in funds		56,275	461,052	(630,764)	(113,437)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		624,516	1,105,853	6,962,301	8,692,670
Total funds carried forward		680,791	1,566,905	6,331,537	8,579,233

THE EXCEL ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 AUGUST 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £	2024 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12		5,800,901		6,442,625
Current assets					
Debtors	13	330,843		231,669	
Cash at bank and in hand		2,842,850		2,695,137	
		3,173,693		2,926,806	
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(683,645)		(549,119)	
Net current assets			2,490,048		2,377,687
Total assets less current liabilities			8,290,949		8,820,312
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	15		(78,720)		(95,079)
Net assets excluding pension liability			8,212,229		8,725,233
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	19		-		(146,000)
Total net assets			8,212,229		8,579,233
Funds of the academy trust:					
Restricted funds	17				
- Fixed asset funds			5,705,822		6,331,537
- Restricted income funds			1,661,346		1,712,905
- Pension reserve			-		(146,000)
Total restricted funds			7,367,168		7,898,442
Unrestricted income funds	17		845,061		680,791
Total funds			8,212,229		8,579,233

The financial statements on pages 26 to 50 were approved by the trustees and authorised for issue on 12 December 2025 and are signed on their behalf by:

S E Hall

S E Hall
Chair of Trustees

Company registration number 07837770 (England and Wales)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities					
Net cash provided by operating activities	**20**		230,523		305,972
Cash flows from investing activities					
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		40,120		336	
Capital grants from DfE Group		26,314		27,077	
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(131,086)		(87,884)	
Net cash used in investing activities			(64,652)		(60,471)
Cash flows from financing activities					
Repayment of other loan		(16,009)		(16,994)	
Finance costs		(2,149)		(2,498)	
Net cash used in financing activities			(18,158)		(19,492)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period			147,713		226,009
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year			2,695,137		2,469,128
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year			2,842,850		2,695,137

1 Accounting policies

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

1.1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the academy trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements 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 2024 to 2025 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

The Excel Academy Partnership meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

1.2 Going concern

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

1.3 Income

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

Grants

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

General Annual Grant is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the period for which it is receivable, and any abatement in respect of the period is deducted from income and recognised as a liability.

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

Sponsorship income

Sponsorship income provided to the academy trust which amounts to a donation is recognised in the statement of financial activities in the period in which it is receivable (where there are no performance-related conditions), where the receipt is probable and it can be measured reliably.

Donations

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

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

Other income

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

Donated goods, facilities and services

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

Donated fixed assets

Donated fixed assets are measured at fair value unless it is impractical to measure this reliably, in which case the cost of the item to the donor is used. The gain is recognised as income from donations and a corresponding amount is included in the appropriate fixed asset category and depreciated over the useful economic life in accordance with the academy trust's accounting policies.

1.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Expenditure on raising funds

This includes all expenditure incurred by the academy trust to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities events and non-charitable trading.

Charitable activities

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

1.5 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

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 that require 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.

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

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

Leasehold improvements	over 22 years
Long leasehold property	over 22 years
Computer equipment	over 3 years
Fixtures, fittings and equipment	over 7 years
Motor vehicles	over 7 years

The trust's land and buildings are occupied on a 125 year lease from the local authority. In the view of the trustees, the risks and rewards of occupying the site have been substantially transferred to the trust and therefore the land and buildings have been recognised as a donation on conversion and capitalised within the restricted fixed assets fund. The valuation was provided by the ESFA on a depreciated replacement cost basis.

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.

1.6 Liabilities

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

1.7 Leased assets

Rentals under operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

1.8 Financial instruments

The academy trust only holds basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102. The financial assets and financial liabilities of the academy trust and their measurement basis are as follows.

Financial assets

Trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

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

Financial liabilities

Trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost. 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 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

1.9 Taxation

The academy trust is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the academy trust is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by chapter 3 part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

1.10 Pensions benefits

Retirement benefits to employees of the academy trust are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ('TPS') and the Local Government Pension Scheme ('LGPS'). These are defined benefit schemes and the assets are held separately from those of the academy trust.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the academy trust in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by the Government Actuary based on quadrennial valuations using a prospective unit credit method. The 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 are recognised in the period to which they relate.

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

1.11 Fund accounting

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

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

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

1.12 Agency arrangements

The academy trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 bursary and other funds from the ESFA and private sponsors. Payments received and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the statement of financial activities as the trust does not have control over the charitable application of the funds. The trust can use up to 5% of the allocation towards its own administration costs and this is recognised in the statement of financial activities. The funds received and paid and any balances held are disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

2 Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

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

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

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 19, 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 2025. 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. The UK corporate bond yields at 31 August 2025 are at their highest levels for many years resulting in higher accounting discount rates at the year end. This places a significantly lower value on the pension obligations compared to last year and will be one of the main reasons a net asset has been reported. We have ensured that our assumptions are appropriate for the Academy Partnership and the valuation has been based on the following estimates:

• There is a minimum funding requirement in relation to LGPS
• There is the ability to recover a surplus through the ability to reduce future contributions (not refund)
• In calculating the surplus, the present value of current and past service costs is offset against the future contributions over the future period
• The present values in the above calculations are calculated using an annuity representing participation into perpetuity.

There is no known intention to exit the LPGS and therefore the economic benefit of a refund would be highly unlikely and on that basis recognition of an asset is considered inappropriate. We have however considered the economic benefit available to the Academy Partnership as a future contribution reduction and whether it is appropriate to recognise the net asset in full. Under FRS 102, a net asset restriction may apply as the prevailing view is that a minimum funding requirement for future service exists in the LGPS. We requested our actuaries consider the impact of the minimum funding requirement on the asset ceiling and as a result we have restricted the asset to £nil based upon an asset restriction calculation. We consider this to be appropriate and a more accurate reflection of the pension positions as at 31 August 2025.

Critical areas of judgement
Depreciation - Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less it's residual value, over the economic life of that asset. An estimate of the useful life of assets is detailed in the depreciation accounting policy. The value of depreciation charge during the year was £773k.

Land and buildings - Land and buildings are held under a 125 year lease from Durham County Council. These assets are included on the balance sheet of the academy due to the significant risks and rewards of ownership belonging to the academy, the lease term being the major part of the economic life of the assets and the assets being of such a specialised nature that only the academy could use them without major modification.

3 Donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Capital grants	-	26,314	26,314	27,077

4 Funding for the academy trust's educational operations

Educational operations	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
DfE/ESFA grants				
General annual grant (GAG)	-	7,199,212	7,199,212	6,971,772
Other DfE/ESFA grants:				
- Pupil premium	-	291,613	291,613	299,270
- ESFA 16 - 19 funding	-	754,773	754,773	919,126
- Rates income	-	29,425	29,425	33,878
- Teachers pension	-	202,102	202,102	108,146
- Teachers pay	-	124,402	124,402	125,891
- Mainstream schools additional grant	-	-	-	248,330
- Supplementary grant	-	-	-	75,279
- Core schools budget grant	-	265,154	265,154	-
- Core schools budget grant 16 - 19	-	27,235	27,235	-
- NI grant	-	45,436	45,436	-
- Others	-	29,818	29,818	34,341
	-	8,969,170	8,969,170	8,816,033
Other government grants				
Local authority grants	-	407,469	407,469	420,364
Other incoming resources	41,807	-	41,807	30,340
Total funding for educational operations	41,807	9,376,639	9,418,446	9,266,737
Catering income	356,232	-	356,232	352,392
Total funding	398,039	9,376,639	9,774,678	9,619,129

5 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Lettings	105,321	-	105,321	101,465
Catering income	-	-	-	5,441
Parental contributions	395,898	-	395,898	384,837
Other income	50,693	-	50,693	61,368
	551,912	-	551,912	553,111

6 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Short term deposits	40,120	-	40,120	336

7 Expenditure

		Non-pay expenditure			
	Staff costs £	Premises £	Other £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Expenditure on raising funds					
- Direct costs	31,581	-	401,979	433,560	127,933
Academy's educational operations					
- Direct costs	6,471,178	-	574,986	7,046,164	7,030,933
- Allocated support costs	1,514,100	1,281,738	579,466	3,375,304	3,330,224
	8,016,859	1,281,738	1,556,431	10,855,028	10,489,090

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:	2025 £	2024 £
Operating lease rentals	3,729	19,356
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	772,810	735,642
Fees payable to auditor for:		
- Audit	13,950	13,250
- Other services	4,700	4,350
Bank and loan interest	2,149	2,498
Net interest on defined benefit pension liability	-	10,000

8 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Direct costs				
Educational operations	-	7,046,164	7,046,164	7,030,933
Support costs				
Educational operations	398,039	2,977,265	3,375,304	3,330,224
	398,039	10,023,429	10,421,468	10,361,157

Analysis of support costs

	2025 £	2024 £
Support staff costs	1,516,446	1,371,151
Depreciation	772,810	735,642
Technology costs	71,740	117,194
Premises costs	508,928	579,200
Legal costs	11,000	8,036
Other support costs	467,682	493,073
Governance costs	26,698	25,928
	3,375,304	3,330,224

9 Staff

Staff costs and employee benefits
Staff costs during the year were:

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	5,675,254	5,524,634
Social security costs	632,683	561,846
Pension costs	1,333,778	1,216,300
Staff costs - employees	7,641,715	7,302,780
Agency staff costs	324,382	355,320
Staff restructuring costs	50,762	8,685
	8,016,859	7,666,785
Staff development and other staff costs	80,172	65,314
Total staff expenditure	8,097,031	7,732,099

Staff restructuring costs comprise:

	2025 £	2024 £
Redundancy payments	16,288	-
Severance payments	34,474	8,685
	50,762	8,685

Special staff severance payments
Special staff severance payments are amounts paid to employees outside of statutory and contractual requirements. Included in staff restructuring costs are special severance payments totalling £34,474 (2024: £8,685). Individually, the payments were: £5,966 and £28,508.

Staff numbers
The average number of persons employed by the academy trust during the year was as follows:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Teachers	77	76
Administration and support	112	116
Management	9	9
	198	201

9 Staff **(Continued)**

Higher paid staff

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

	2025 Number	2024 Number
£60,001 - £70,000	2	3
£70,001 - £80,000	4	2
£80,001 - £90,000	1	1
£120-001 - £130,000	-	1

Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the academy trust comprise the trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the academy trust was £802,370 (2024: £893,049).

10 Trustees' remuneration and expenses

In the prior year, One or more of the trustees has been paid remuneration or has received other benefits from an employment with the academy trust. The principal and other staff trustees only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of principal and staff members under their contracts of employment, and not in respect of their services as trustees.

This year no staff trustees received remuneration.

The value of trustees' remuneration and other benefits in the prior year was as follows:

Mr A Byers (Headteacher)
Remuneration (2024 : £120,001 - £125,000)
Employer's pension contributions (2024: £25,001 - £30,000)

11 Trustees' and officers' insurance

The academy 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 academy 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.

12 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold improvements	Long leasehold property	Computer equipment	Fixtures, fittings and equipment	Motor vehicles	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost						
At 1 September 2024	3,323,418	7,791,439	1,058,350	1,710,992	8,650	13,892,849
Additions	-	-	70,328	10,897	49,861	131,086
At 31 August 2025	3,323,418	7,791,439	1,128,678	1,721,889	58,511	14,023,935
Depreciation						
At 1 September 2024	1,215,283	4,122,788	901,637	1,204,027	6,489	7,450,224
Charge for the year	-	482,156	118,391	169,453	2,810	772,810
At 31 August 2025	1,215,283	4,604,944	1,020,028	1,373,480	9,299	8,223,034
Net book value						
At 31 August 2025	2,108,135	3,186,495	108,650	348,409	49,212	5,800,901
At 31 August 2024	2,108,135	3,668,651	156,713	506,965	2,161	6,442,625

13 Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	20,064	14,203
VAT recoverable	27,561	39,173
Prepayments and accrued income	283,218	178,293
	330,843	231,669

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Other loans	16,359	16,009
Trade creditors	171,501	31,241
Other taxation and social security	321,991	286,970
Other creditors	90,231	88,776
Accruals and deferred income	83,563	126,123
	683,645	549,119

15 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Other loans	78,720	95,079

Analysis of loans	2025 £	2024 £
Wholly repayable within five years	95,079	111,088
Less: included in current liabilities	(16,359)	(16,009)
Amounts included above	78,720	95,079
Loan maturity		
Debt due in one year or less	16,359	16,009
Due in more than one year but not more than two years	16,708	16,173
Due in more than two years but not more than five years	43,462	51,362
Due in more than five years	18,550	27,544
	95,079	111,088

The trust also has two ESFA loans. One with a balance of £33,422 (2024: £41,370). This is at an interest rate of 1.85% and repayable by August 2028. Another with a balance of £61,657 (2024: £69,718). This is at an interest rate of 1.95% and repayable by August 2032.

16 Deferred income

	2025 £	2024 £
Deferred income is included within:		
Creditors due within one year	65,422	69,922
Deferred income at 1 September 2024	69,922	68,391
Released from previous years	(69,922)	(68,391)
Resources deferred in the year	65,422	69,922
Deferred income at 31 August 2025	65,422	69,922

Deferred income includes rates relief and income for trips received in advance of the next financial year.

17 Funds

	Balance at 1 September 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains, losses and transfers £	Balance at 31 August 2025 £
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,642,905	7,199,212	(7,059,990)	(120,781)	1,661,346
Pupil premium	-	291,613	(291,613)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	29,818	(29,818)	-	-
Other government grants	70,000	407,469	(477,469)	-	-
Teachers pension grant	-	202,102	(202,102)	-	-
Teachers pay grant	-	124,402	(124,402)	-	-
Rates	-	29,425	(29,425)	-	-
Core schools budget grant 16 - 19	-	27,235	(27,235)	-	-
Core schools budget grant	-	265,154	(265,154)	-	-
ESFA 16-19 funding	-	754,773	(754,773)	-	-
NI grant	-	45,436	(45,436)	-	-
Pension reserve	(146,000)	-	51,000	95,000	-
	1,566,905	9,376,639	(9,256,417)	(25,781)	1,661,346
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Inherited on conversion	3,571,100	-	(321,443)	-	3,249,657
DfE group capital grants	2,482,996	26,314	(381,669)	-	2,127,641
Capital expenditure from GAG	231,919	-	(35,649)	120,781	317,051
Donated assets	45,522	-	(34,049)	-	11,473
	6,331,537	26,314	(772,810)	120,781	5,705,822
Total restricted funds	7,898,442	9,402,953	(10,029,227)	95,000	7,367,168
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	669,067	990,071	(825,518)	-	833,620
School fund	11,724	-	(283)	-	11,441
	680,791	990,071	(825,801)	-	845,061
Total funds	8,579,233	10,393,024	(10,855,028)	95,000	8,212,229

17 Funds **(Continued)**

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

General Annual Grant must be used for the normal running costs of the academy. Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the academy trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG that it could carry forward at 31 August 2025.

Other DfE/ESFA grants include pupil premium, core schools budget grant, ESFA 16-19 funding, NI grant, and other grants received from DfE/ESFA.

Other grants include income funding for pupils with special educational needs and other grants received from the local authority.

The pension reserve reflects the LGPS transactions. The costs and income associated with the defined benefit pension scheme have been recorded in the restricted fund. Staff costs are paid from this fund, including contributions to the LGPS, and the pension liability has therefore been aligned with these funds.

DfE/ESFA capital grants consist of devolved capital grant, all which has been spent during the year. A transfer has also been made to reflect the loan repayments from GAG.

Inherited fixed asset fund reflects the fixed assets acquired from Durham County Council on conversion. Depreciation on these assets is charged against this fund.

Unrestricted funds are available to be spent on any purpose, at the discretion of the trustees, within the objectives of the academy trust.

The academy's restricted general and unrestricted funds were £2,506,407 as at 31 August 2025.

17 Funds **(Continued)**

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

	Balance at 1 September 2023	Income	Expenditure	Gains, losses and transfers	Balance at 31 August 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,366,849	6,971,772	(6,617,915)	(77,801)	1,642,905
Pupil premium	-	299,270	(299,270)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	34,341	(34,341)	-	-
Other government grants	96,004	420,364	(446,368)	-	70,000
Teachers pension grant	-	108,146	(108,146)	-	-
Teachers pay grant	-	125,891	(125,891)	-	-
Rates	-	33,878	(33,878)	-	-
Mainstream schools additional grant	-	248,330	(248,330)	-	-
Supplementary grant	-	75,279	(75,279)	-	-
ESFA 16-19 funding	-	919,126	(919,126)	-	-
Pension reserve	(357,000)	-	35,000	176,000	(146,000)
	1,105,853	9,236,397	(8,873,544)	98,199	1,566,905
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Inherited on conversion	3,892,543	-	(321,443)	-	3,571,100
DfE group capital grants	2,836,597	27,077	(380,678)	-	2,482,996
Capital expenditure from GAG	178,007	-	(23,889)	77,801	231,919
Connect the classroom	50,504	-	(4,982)	-	45,522
Donated assets	4,650	-	(4,650)	-	-
	6,962,301	27,077	(735,642)	77,801	6,331,537
Total restricted funds	8,068,154	9,263,474	(9,609,186)	176,000	7,898,442
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	612,485	934,966	(878,384)	-	669,067
School fund	12,031	1,213	(1,520)	-	11,724
	624,516	936,179	(879,904)	-	680,791
Total funds	8,692,670	10,199,653	(10,489,090)	176,000	8,579,233

18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted funds: General	Fixed asset	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 August 2025 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	5,800,901	5,800,901
Current assets	845,061	2,328,632	-	3,173,693
Current liabilities	-	(667,286)	(16,359)	(683,645)
Non-current liabilities	-	-	(78,720)	(78,720)
Total net assets	845,061	1,661,346	5,705,822	8,212,229

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted funds: General	Fixed asset	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 August 2024 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	6,442,625	6,442,625
Current assets	680,791	2,246,015	-	2,926,806
Current liabilities	-	(533,110)	(16,009)	(549,119)
Non-current liabilities	-	-	(95,079)	(95,079)
Pension scheme liability	-	(146,000)	-	(146,000)
Total net assets	680,791	1,566,905	6,331,537	8,579,233

19 Pension and similar obligations

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

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

Contributions amounting to £158,307 (2024: £120,621) were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2025 and are included within creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

Introduction

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

19 Pension and similar obligations **(Continued)**

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

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

The result of this valuation was implemented on 1 April 2024.The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2027.

The employer's pension costs paid to the TPS in the period amounted to £1,098,998 (2024: £837,008).

A copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation is on the Teachers' Pensions website.

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The academy trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan. Accordingly, the academy trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The academy trust has set out above the information available on the scheme.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined-benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contributions are as noted below. The agreed contribution rates for future years are 18.2% for employers and 5.5 to 12.5% for employees.

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.

Total contributions made	**2025**	**2024**
	£	**£**
Employer's contributions	303,000	297,000
Employees' contributions	102,000	99,000
Total contributions	405,000	396,000

19 Pension and similar obligations **(Continued)**

Principal actuarial assumptions	**2025**	**2024**
	%	**%**
Rate of increase in salaries	3.5	3.5
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.5	2.5
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	6.1	4.9
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.5	2.5

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

	2025	**2024**
	Years	**Years**
Retiring today		
- Males	21.9	21.5
- Females	23.9	23.8
Retiring in 20 years		
- Males	22.8	22.4
- Females	24.7	24.6

Sensitivity analysis
Scheme liabilities would have been affected by changes in assumptions as follows:

	2025	**2024**
	£	**£**
Discount rate + 0.1%	4,107,000	4,690,000
Discount rate - 0.1%	4,267,000	4,896,000
Mortality assumption + 1 year	4,095,000	4,666,000
Mortality assumption - 1 year	4,279,000	4,916,000
CPI rate + 0.1%	4,254,000	4,805,000
CPI rate - 0.1%	4,120,000	4,777,000

19 Pension and similar obligations **(Continued)**

The academy trust's share of the assets in the scheme	**2025 Fair value £**	**2024 Fair value £**
Equities	2,965,000	2,560,000
Government bonds	555,000	469,000
Corporate bonds	460,000	446,000
Cash	42,000	88,000
Property	402,000	297,000
Other assets	861,000	785,000
Total market value of assets	5,285,000	4,645,000
Restriction on scheme assets	(1,098,000)	-
Net assets recognised	4,187,000	4,645,000

The actual return on scheme assets was £325,000 (2024: £363,000).

Amount recognised in the statement of financial activities	**2025 £**	**2024 £**
Current service cost	252,000	252,000
Interest income	(235,000)	(206,000)
Interest cost	235,000	216,000
Total amount recognised	252,000	262,000

Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations	**2025 £**	**2024 £**
At 1 September 2024	4,791,000	4,297,000
Current service cost	252,000	252,000
Interest cost	235,000	216,000
Employee contributions	102,000	99,000
Actuarial gain	(1,103,000)	(19,000)
Benefits paid	(90,000)	(54,000)
At 31 August 2025	4,187,000	4,791,000

19 Pension and similar obligations (Continued)

Changes in the fair value of the academy trust's share of scheme assets

	2025 £	2024 £
At 1 September 2024	4,645,000	3,940,000
Interest income	235,000	206,000
Actuarial gain	90,000	157,000
Employer contributions	303,000	297,000
Employee contributions	102,000	99,000
Benefits paid	(90,000)	(54,000)
At 31 August 2025	5,285,000	4,645,000
Restriction on scheme assets	(1,098,000)	-
Net assets recognised	4,187,000	4,645,000

Restriction of pension scheme assets

The net gain recognised on scheme assets has been restricted because the full pension surplus is not expected to be recovered through refunds or reduced contributions in the future.

20 Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Net expenditure for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)		(462,004)	(289,437)
Adjusted for:			
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income		(26,314)	(27,077)
Investment income receivable	6	(40,120)	(336)
Finance costs payable		2,149	2,498
Defined benefit pension costs less contributions payable	19	(51,000)	(45,000)
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost	19	-	10,000
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets		772,810	735,642
(Increase)/decrease in debtors		(99,174)	27,838
Increase/(decrease) in creditors		134,176	(108,156)
Net cash provided by operating activities		230,523	305,972

21 Analysis of changes in net funds

	1 September 2024	Cash flows	31 August 2025
	£	£	£
Cash	2,695,137	147,713	2,842,850
Loans falling due within one year	(16,009)	(350)	(16,359)
Loans falling due after more than one year	(95,079)	16,359	(78,720)
	2,584,049	163,722	2,747,771

22 Related party transactions

Owing to the nature of the academy trust's operations 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 academy trust has an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the academy trust's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures. The following related party transaction took place in the period of account.

No related party transactions took place in the period of account, other than certain trustees' remuneration and expenses already disclosed in note 10.

23 Members' liability

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

24 Agency arrangements

The academy trust distributes 16-19 and vulnerable bursary funds to students as an agent for DfE. In the accounting period ending 31 August 2025 the trust brought forward £21,614 (2024: £18,637) from previous years, received £21,283 (2024: £22,355) and disbursed £15,299 (2024: £19,378) from the fund. An amount of £27,598 (2024: £21,614) is included in other creditors relating to undistributed funds that is repayable to DfE.