

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members

D Jones
W Stephenson
Chair of the Trust Board (C King)
The Oxford Diocesan Board of Education

Directors

W Hemmingsley, Chief Executive
K Black
C King, Chair
C Laing
C Mitchell
L Williams

Company Registration Number

08060721

Company Name

The Mill Academy

Principal and Registered Office

The Henry Box School, Church Green, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 4AX

Company Secretary

K Hex

Chief Executive

W Hemmingsley

Senior Management Team

W Hemmingsley, Chief Executive, Accounting Officer and Head teacher of The Henry Box School
V Musson, Director of Education and Head teacher of Queen Emma's Primary School
N Stretton, Chief Finance Officer
R Goddard, Deputy Head teacher of The Henry Box School
L Dixon, Head teacher of Finstock CE Primary School

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Independent Auditor

James Cowper Kreston Audit, 2 Chawley Park, Cumnor Hill, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX2 9GG

Bankers

Lloyds Bank Plc, P O Box 1000, Andover, BX1 1LT

Solicitors

Harrison Clark Rickerbys, Ellenborough House, Wellington Street, Cheltenham, GL50 1YD

Internal Auditor

Bishop Fleming, 10 Temple Back, Bristol, BS1 6FL

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of The Mill Academy ('the Trust' or 'the charitable company') for the period 31 August 2024. The annual report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report, and a Directors' report under company law.

The Trust operates two primary schools and one secondary school in West Oxfordshire. Its academies have a combined pupil capacity of 1,889 and had a roll of 1,300 in the school census in October 2024.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Constitution

The Trust, which was incorporated on 8 May 2012 and opened as an Academy on 1 June 2012, 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 Trust.

The Trustees act as the Trustees for the charitable activities of the Trust and are the Directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law.

Details of the Trustees who served throughout the period, except as noted, 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 Trustees benefit from indemnity insurance purchased by the Trust to cover the liability of the Trustees arising from negligent acts, errors or commissions occurring whilst on Trust business. The limit of this indemnity is £5,000,000.

Principal Activities

The principal activity of the Trust is to advance for the public benefit, ensuring each of its academies are at the heart of its community, promoting community cohesion and sharing facilities with other schools and/or other educational institutions and the wider community.

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

On the formation of The Mill Academy, from the former single academy trust known as The Henry Box School, new Trustees were appointed. The Trust shall have the following Trustees as set out in its Articles of Association and Funding Agreement:

- up to 9 Trustees who are appointed by the Members;
- up to 3 Trustees who are appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education; and
- the Chief Executive who is treated for all purposes as being a Trustee.

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

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

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

The training and induction provided for new Trustees will depend upon their existing experience and tends to be done informally and tailored specifically to the individual based on an audit of their skills. All Trustees are provided with electronic copies (or links to shared areas) of policies, procedures, plans and other documents they will need to undertake their role as Trustees.

There are Trustee training days organised each year which includes training sessions to keep the Trustees updated on relevant developments impacting on their roles and responsibilities. The Trust subscribes to the National Governor Association and The Key giving Trustees access to a range of resources, articles and training.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Trustees normally meets at least six times a year. The Trustees establish an overall framework for the governance of the Trust and determines membership, terms of reference and procedures of its Committees and other groups. It receives reports including policies from its Committees for ratification. It monitors the activities of the Committees through the minutes of their meetings. The Board of Trustees may from time to time establish working groups to perform specific tasks over a limited timescale.

There are eight Committees of the Board of Trustees as below. During the year 2023/24 the Education Standards and Performance Committee did not operate as a separate committee, with educational standards and performance matters being dealt with at full Board of Trustees meetings. During 2023/24 the Remuneration Committee sat on one occasion, and the Risk and Audit Committee was combined with the Finance and Resources Committee with business on risk and audit being considered as separate items on the committee agenda.

- The Henry Box School Local Committee
- Queen Emma's Primary Local Committee
- Finstock Church of England Primary Local Committee
- Executive
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Risk and Audit Committee
- Educational Standards and Performance Committee
- Remuneration Committee

Each Committee has its own terms of reference detailing the responsibilities discharged to it.

The following decisions are reserved to the full Board:

- to consider any proposals for changes to the name, status, educational character, mission, ethos or constitution of the Trust and its committee structure;
- to approve the annual estimates of income and expenditure (budgets) and major projects and to sign off the annual statement of accounts;
- to appoint and consider the performance management of the Chief Executive;
- to appoint the Chief Finance Officer;
- to appoint the Clerk to the Trustees and Company Secretary.

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

The Trustees have devolved the day-to-day management of the Trust to the Chief Executive and the Executive Team. The Executive Team comprises the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, and the Director of Education; and is supported by an Executive Assistant and the Headteachers of the Schools in the Trust. The Executive Team implements the policies laid down by the Trustees and reports back to them on performance.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The Trust has laid out in its annual Pay Policy for Teachers, the system for setting pay and remuneration for all teaching staff, including the Chief Executive, the Headteachers of the Trust schools, and all senior leaders who

are teachers. The Pay Policy is consistent with the School Teacher's Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and is based on the model agreed between Oxfordshire County Council and the teaching Unions.

Pay and remuneration for all Trust support staff is in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the National Joint Council (NJC) "Green Book". The Chief Finance Officer is remunerated in accordance with the "Green Book".

The Trust is currently not statutorily required to report on its gender pay gap but is monitoring this closely.

Trade union facility time

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	Full-time equivalent employee number
2	2

Percentage of time spent on facility time

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

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Provide the total cost of facility time	£246.16
Provide the total pay bill	£7,165,116
Provide the percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time	0%

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours	100%
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Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

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

Engagement with employees (including disabled persons)

The Trust is currently not statutorily required to report on its engagement with employees, however the Trustees report that all its school leaders work closely and inclusively with all employees. Staff wellbeing initiatives are in place for all staff when they need them, and regular staff surveys are undertaken each year with both positive and negative feedback used to learn from and develop practices. Professional development for all staff is a key priority for the Trust and its Leaders and by working together within our family of schools we nurture and encourage our staff to grow and develop so they can take advantage of any career progression opportunities which arise. The Trustees are proud to report that The Henry Box School holds the Teacher Development Trust Gold Award.

We are an inclusive Trust and we welcome applications from all groups including those that are often under-represented in workforces including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objects and Aims

The principal objects of the Trust, as set out in its Articles of Association, are to:

- a. to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing a school which shall offer a broad and balanced curriculum; and which shall include:
 - i. Schools other than those designated Church of England, whether with or without a designated religious character; and
 - ii. Church of England schoolsbut in relation to each of the schools to recognise and support their individual ethos, whether or not designated Church of England.
- b. In relation to the non-Church of England schools to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Witney and the surrounding area the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity, disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

The broad aims of the Trust during the period ended 31 August 2024 are summarised below:

1. To secure equity.
2. To ensure leadership drives improvement.
3. To ensure our curriculum is irresistible.
4. To be research informed in all decision making.
5. To ensure effective management of resources.

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

The key priorities for the period are contained in the Trust's Development Plan which is available from the Chief Executive. The main activities of the Trust for the period ended 31 August 2024 were as follows:

Priority 1: Secure equity

Objectives

- 1.1 Improve the attendance of vulnerable children
- 1.2 Improve the engagement of vulnerable families
- 1.3 Ensure absolute fidelity to a phonics programme to enable all children to read accurately and fluently
- 1.4 Identify, signpost and co-ordinate the support for vulnerable children and families
- 1.5 Lead a professional development programme to ensure high quality teaching across all subjects and phases
- 1.6 Increase leadership development across the Trust to recruit, retain and develop the best

Strategies

- Identify barriers and support the needs of the local community (increase in students with SEND, EAL, families with increasing economic pressures and vulnerability)
- Early identification
- Invest in KS4 provision so that the best teachers are pre and post teaching the students who require the most support to ensure they keep up and catch up
- Ensure all students can read with accuracy and fluency by the end of Year 7 and dedicate resource to this
- Increased range of inclusive teaching strategies so that rates of progress for SEND, disadvantaged and LPA improve still further
- Improve parental engagement through an explicit marketing strategy
- Review, design and implement an approach to health and well-being across the Trust
- Establish and resource enhanced pathways for the most vulnerable in EYFS/KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4
- Continue with a relational approach to behaviour management

Priority 2: To ensure leadership drives improvement

Objectives

- 2.1 All Trust Leaders have the knowledge and skill to drive school improvement across the Trust
- 2.2 People strategy ensures emerging leaders are developed
- 2.3 Develop Trust-wide distributed leadership

Strategies

- Talent identified through Appraisal process
- Provide opportunities to lead Trust wide projects
- Mentoring programme for all School Leaders
- Support School Leaders with leadership training (e.g. NPQs, internal and external professional development)

Priority 3: To ensure our curriculum is irresistible

Objectives

- 3.1 Continue to develop a coherent and sequential curriculum
- 3.2 Increase subject expertise
- 3.3 Further develop teacher subject and pedagogical knowledge across the Trust

Strategies

- Ensure fidelity to Read Write Inc programmes
- Professional Development ensures staff have skills and knowledge required
- Systematic sharing of effective practice established
- Increase collaborative work on curriculum across the Trust
- All subjects include memorable experiences and increased cultural capital
- Invest in KS4 provision so that the best teachers are pre and post teaching the students who require the most support to ensure they keep up and catch up
- Use assessment effectively to close gaps

Priority 4: To be research informed in all decision making

Objectives

- 4.1 Encourage teachers to be actively engaged in action research
- 4.2 Ensure all decisions are informed by research
- 4.3 All professional development is research informed

Strategies

- Voluntary research group
- Appraisal process
- Engage in high quality leadership development programmes, both internal and external

Priority 5: To continue to manage resources effectively

Objectives:

- 5.1 Increase post-16 recruitment to ensure a sustainable post-16 offer
- 5.2 Increased collaboration across Trust schools
- 5.3 Shared SENCo expertise across Trust
- 5.4 Continue to have an inclusive Key Stage 4 curriculum ensuring less reliance on costly external providers
- 5.5 Shared resources across Trust and primaries to ensure viability of small primary
- 5.6 Recruitment and retention is high priority aligned to the People Strategy to mitigate risks of current recruitment challenges across the profession

Public Benefit

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

STRATEGIC REPORT

The Trust has continued to work on the priorities set out by the Board of Trustees and contained in the 'Objectives' section above. The notable achievements this year were:

- Finstock Church of England Primary School Ofsted Inspection, January 2024 (judged as 'Outstanding' in all areas)
- Queen Emma's Primary School Ofsted Inspection, April 2024 (judged as 'Good' with 'Outstanding' effectiveness in Early Years Provision and Personal Development)
- Professional development programmes
- Relational approach to behaviour management is now well established
- Significant increase in support for the most vulnerable children and families
- Improved provision and outcomes for children with SEND at Key Stage 4
- Increased focus on student and staff health and well-being

Environmental factors to consider are the ongoing economic instability, increasing inflation, staff pay rates and cost of living including energy. The uncertainty about the new Government's approach to national and local education funding is only just developing and until the direction of travel is clearer it continues to affect our ability to forecast accurately both in the short and medium term. The following are some of the ongoing challenges:

- The negative legacies of Covid-19 including sustaining educational progress for those children who were adversely affected by national lockdowns and remote learning;
- Cost of living crisis leading to many more children and families are in absolute poverty;
- Large increases in the number of children, young people and families experiencing mental ill health;
- The school workforce recruitment and retention crisis;
- Decimation of the services around schools;
- Systemic failings in local area provision and support alongside increasing numbers of children with SEND.

The Trust schools continued to participate fully in the scheme for food vouchers for free school meals and vulnerable students. The Trust has been assured by independent surveyor reports that all its schools are free from Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC), and the Trust's central team continues to be alert to premises related issues and estates compliance requirements.

In line with the Trust's civic role, we continue to work with civic partners and stakeholders in the local area to contribute to the Public Good. For example, one of our School Leaders leads maths teacher training for Buckinghamshire Maths Hub and the Director of Education is on the Oxfordshire Strategic Attendance Board, and the Oxfordshire Primary Headteacher Network, representing the Witney Partnership of Schools.

The Trust faces a number of principal risks as set out in the 'Principal Risks and Uncertainties' section.

The Trust uses various financial instruments including cash and items such as trade debtors and trade creditors that arise directly from its operations.

The existence of these financial instruments exposes the Trust to a number of financial risks which are described in more detail below.

The main risks arising from the financial statements are cash flow, interest rate risk and credit risk. The Trust seeks to manage financial risk by ensuring sufficient liquidity is available to meet foreseeable needs and to invest cash assets safely and profitably. The Trust seeks to manage its cash reserves to ensure liabilities are settled as they fall due.

Achievements and Performance

The Trust is in its twelfth period of operation since conversion on 1 June 2012 and the ninth period as a multi-academy trust.

The total number of pupils in Trust schools at the end of the period ended 31 August 2023 was 1,286 and increased to 1,300 at the October 2024 census date. The number of pupils in the primary schools is decreasing as the numbers leaving at year 6 are higher than the numbers arriving in reception, due to recent lower birth rates. Secondary numbers are expected to rise year on year in the medium term as the higher numbers entering year 7 start to exceed those leaving at year 11. The numbers at Finstock CE Primary school are low at 31 but have been increasing despite low numbers of young families in the catchment area; with the school's numbers up 24% since October 2023. The impact of Finstock's outstanding OFSTED rating seems to be attracting more families from out of their normal catchment, with nursery numbers increasing and leading onto higher admission into reception.

The Trust is committed to continual improvement which is achieved in a number of ways, including quality assurance and research informed professional development.

The particular achievements and performance of the Trust during the period ended 31 August 2024 were as follows:

GCSE Results 2024

The Henry Box School

Number of Candidates	169
English & Maths 4+	56%
English & Maths 5+	33%
Average Attainment 8 Score	39.22
Progress 8 Measure	-0.32

GCE (A Level) Results

The Henry Box School

Number of Candidates	64
A*-B Grades	53%
A*-C Grades	76%
A*-E Grades	97%

Queen Emma's Primary School

GLD	National
63.2	67.7

PSC	National
86.4	80.3

KS2	Reading		Writing		Maths		RWM	
	EXS	GDS	EXS	GDS	EXS	GDS	EXS	GDS
2024	51.5%	6.1%	66.7%	9.1%	54.5%	12.1%	36.4%	0%
	Nat	Nat	Nat	Nat	Nat	Nat	Nat	Nat
	74.3%	28.6%	66.7%	12.9%	73.1%	23.9%	60.6%	7.7%

*9 pupils of the class of 33 pupils joined the schools within 18 months of SATs.

Pupils on roll for 6+ years (22)	Reading		Writing		Maths		RWM	
	EXS	GDS	EXS	GDS	EXS	GDS	EXS	GDS
2024	68.2%	4.5%	66.8%	9%	63.6%	13.6%	63.6%	0%
	Nat 74.3%	Nat 28.6%	Nat 66.7%	Nat 12.9%	Nat 73.1%	Nat 23.9%	Nat 60.6%	Nat 7.7%

Finstock Church of England Primary School

GLD	National
100	67.7

PSC	National
100	80.3

KS2	Reading		Writing		Maths		RWM	
	EXS	GDS	EXS	GDS	EXS	GDS	EXS	GDS
2024	75%	50%	75%	50%	50%	25%	50%	25%
	Nat 74.3%	Nat 28.6%	Nat 66.7%	Nat 12.9%	Nat 73.1%	Nat 23.9%	Nat 60.6%	Nat 7.7%

The Henry Box School was subject to a Section 8 Ofsted Inspection in February 2023. The Inspection report confirmed that the school continues to be judged as Good.

Highlights from the report include:

- Leaders have put in place a thoughtfully sequenced curriculum. There are many examples of effective and inclusive practice across subjects.
- Behaviour in lessons is largely positive and staff use the new 'ready-respectful-safe' approaches consistently to set and maintain high expectations in class.
- The school's personal development and careers programmes are particularly strong.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and safeguarding has a high priority in school.
- Staff are overwhelmingly proud to work at the school.
- Governors are well trained and fulfil their statutory duties effectively.

Further details can be found on the School's website at www.henrybox.oxon.sch.uk

Queen Emma's Primary School was subject to a Section 5 Ofsted Inspection in April 2024 and received an overall rating of Good, as well as individual judgement of Outstanding in the categories of:

- Early Years Provision
- Personal Development

With an individual judgement of Good in the categories of:

- Quality of Education
- Leadership and Management
- Behaviour and Attitudes

Further details can be found on the School's website at www.queen-emmas.oxon.sch.uk

Finstock Church of England Primary School was subject to a Section 5 Ofsted Inspection in January 2024 and received an overall rating of Outstanding in all categories.

The report states:

- Pupils receive an excellent start to their education
- Pupils are exceptionally well equipped for continued success
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, (SEND) thrive
- The school is unwavering in its pursuit of excellence

Further details can be found on the School's website at www.finstock.oxon.sch.uk

Key Performance Indicators

Although the Trust's Funding Agreement is not subject to a specific carry forward limit on the amount of GAG funding, the main financial performance indicator is the level of reserves held at the balance sheet date and, in particular, the amount of GAG funding carried forward at the balance sheet date. At 31 August 2024, the balance of the GAG Restricted Fund was £125,361 and the balance of unrestricted general funds is £1,584,086.

As the majority of the Trust's funding is based on pupil numbers, pupil numbers is also a key performance indicator. As noted above, pupil numbers at the most recent census was 1,300 which is an increase of 0.3% from the previous census.

As a result, the ratio of GAG funding per pupil was £6,005 for the period.

Staffing costs are another key performance indicator for the Trust and the percentage of total staff costs to total Government funding for the period was 81.8%, while the percentage of staff costs to total costs was 73.2%.

Going Concern

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

The COVID-19 national lockdown did not impact the Trust as a going concern with new expenditures largely offset by additional COVID recovery grant income.

Promoting the success of the company

The Trustees in line with their duties under section 172 of the Companies Act 2006, act individually and collectively in promoting the success of the Trust to achieve its education purpose and in doing so has regard, amongst other matters, to:

- The likely consequence of any decision in the long run
- the interests of the company's employees
- the need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others
- the impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment
- the desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct
- the need to act fairly as between members of the Trust

The Trustees regard to these matters is embedded in their decision-making processes and through the Trust's strategy, culture, governance framework, key performance indicator management and review, and stakeholder engagement processes.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The majority of the Trust's income is received from the DfE via the ESFA in the form of recurrent grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received from the DfE during the period ended 31 August 2024 and the associated expenditure of these grants are shown as Restricted Funds in the Statement of Financial Activities. Funds are also received from hire of premises, purchase of school meals at the primary schools, school trip income, donations and the purchase of equipment and resources for learning, revision guides and exam resit fees.

The Academy also receives grants for fixed assets from the DfE and other organisations and funders. The balance of the Restricted Fixed Asset fund is reduced by the depreciation charges on its assets. The fixed assets held by the Trust are used exclusively for providing education and associated support services to the pupils of the Academy schools.

During the period ended 31 August 2024, the total expenditure of £9,921,457 was covered by the recurrent grant funding from the DfE, together with other incoming resources (excluding the net assets transferred on conversion from the Local Authority). Excluding depreciation charges of £683,317 and pension reserve deficit of £41,000, total income for the period exceeded total expenditure by £14,707.

The balance of total funds held at 31 August 2024 was £21,345,590 which comprised of the following:

Restricted Funds (excluding Pension Liability)	£133,371
Restricted Pension Liability Fund	(£315,000)
Restricted Fixed Asset Fund	£19,943,133
Unrestricted Funds	£1,584,086

The key financial policies reviewed during the period included Teachers Pay Policy, Financial Procedures Manual, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Disciplinary Policy, Data Protection Policy, Charging and Remissions Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not significantly impact the finances and sustainability of the Trust and its schools. Any impact was largely offset by additional targeted COVID related grant funding.

Financial and Risk Management Objectives and Policies

The Trust has agreed a Risk Management Policy and a Risk Management Plan. In addition, each school in the Trust is asked to keep a risk register. The Trust's risks and risk management plan are constantly reviewed in light of any new information and formally reviewed annually.

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

The Trustees examine the financial health of the Trust formally in its meetings, reviewing performance against budgets and overall expenditure by means of regular update reports at all Finance and Resources Committee meetings and some key full Board of Trustees meetings.

At the balance sheet date, the Trust had no significant liabilities arising from trade creditors or debtors where there would be a significant effect on the Trust's liquidity.

The Trustees recognised that the Local Government Pension Scheme deficit represents a significant potential liability to the Trust. However, as the Trustees consider the Trust is able to meet its known annual contribution commitments for the foreseeable future, the risk from this liability is minimised.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trustees have set out a Risk Management Policy and implemented a system to assess risks that the Trust faces. They have introduced systems, including operational procedures and internal financial controls in order to minimise risk. Where significant financial risk still remains, they have ensured they have adequate insurance cover. An overarching risk register is maintained for the Trust and all school also maintain Risk Registers, all of which are reviewed on a regular basis and are a standing item on all Trust Board and School Committee agendas.

The Trust has an effective system of internal financial controls, and this is explained in more detail in the Statement of Internal Control.

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

Financial

The Trust has considerable reliance on continued Government funding through the ESFA. In the period, approximately 96.4% of the Trust's incoming resources were ultimately Government funded and whilst this level is expected to continue, there is no assurance that Government policy or practice will remain the same or that public funding will continue at the same levels or on the same terms.

During 2023/24, the Trust received grants totalling £109,377 relating to COVID-19 related expenditure and for COVID-19 recovery purposes.

Of the funding received £59,067 was the COVID Recovery Premium. The funding was spent on the following:

- Employment of a student health co-ordinator and Thrive practitioners to address mental wellbeing issues during and following the pandemic and national lockdowns;
- Continuance of subscriptions for online and e-teaching resources in maths, spelling, grammar and writing.

Failures in governance and / or management

The risk in this area arises from the potential failure to effectively manage the Trust's finances, internal controls, compliance with regulations and legislation, statutory returns etc. The Trustees continue to review and ensure appropriate measures are in place to mitigate these risks.

Reputational

The continuing success of the Trust is dependent on continuing to attract applicants in sufficient numbers by maintaining the highest educational standards. To mitigate this risk, the Trustees ensure that pupil success and achievement are closely monitored, reviewed and publicised on the websites and e-prospectus of the schools. Some adverse reporting of the local press and community social media has been and continues to be a risk to school reputations and is closely monitored.

Safeguarding and child protection

The Trustees continue to ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the areas of selection and monitoring of staff, the operation of child protection policies and procedures, health & safety and discipline.

Staffing

The success of the Trust is reliant on the quality of its staff, so the Trustees monitor and review policies and procedures to ensure continued development and training of staff as well as ensuring there is clear succession planning. Recruitment of suitably qualified support staff has been difficult but improving situation during 2023/24 as a result a number of vacancies have been unfilled for longer than normal.

Fraud and mismanagement of funds

The Trust has engaged its internal auditors to perform a program of work aimed at checking and reviewing the financial systems and records as required by the Academy Trust Handbook. All finance staff receive training to keep them up to date with financial practice requirements and to develop their skills in this area.

The COVID-19 restrictions did not impact the Trust in relation to internal controls and the management of funds. The Trust did not experience any fraudulent or deceptive attempts to obtain funds. Email scams are a regular occurrence, but staff are reminded frequently to be vigilant and are kept informed of known scams or "tip offs" of potential fraudulent activities. All Trust staff (not just those with financial responsibilities) are required to complete an annual training programme on how to recognise fraudulent activities and prevent them.

Maintenance of the Trust's Estate

The Trust directly employs its own estate maintenance staff within the central services Team and has during this accounting period increased its staffing capacity by the appointment of a Trust-wide Estates Manager. This team works across all our schools and are able to react to any urgent issues very quickly. The Trust comprehensively insures its estate with commercial insurance and the policy includes support should there be a major incident which forms part of the Trust's disaster recovery and business continuity plans. Estates and facilities management risks are included on both the Trust's and each school's risk registers which are reviewed by Trustees as a standing item on their agenda. The Trust employs and retains a third-party competent person in relation to health and safety, as well as in-house business staff who continually review and manage the Trust's compliance with statutory requirements. The Trust's Finance and Resources Committee is provided with regular updates and assurance from the CEO and Trust Central Team in relation to Estates planning and management and is kept aware of the requirements of the Good Estates Management guidance.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees review the reserve levels of the Trust annually. This review encompasses the nature of the income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. The Trustees also take into consideration the future plans of the Trust, the uncertainty over future income streams and other key risks identified during the risk review.

The Trustees have determined that the appropriate level of free cash reserves for the Trust should provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipts of grants, and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies such as urgent maintenance. The individual schools are asked to keep reserve levels at least above the figure needed to meet its monthly payroll liability and as a Trust as a whole should not be below 5% of total incoming resources. The Trust believes its current commercial insurance arrangements provide sufficient cover to provide immediate responses to emergency situations such as fire, explosion, flood and storm damage; but the Trust will need to review its reserves levels if its insurance arrangements are changed in the future.

The Trust's current level of reserves (defined as restricted general funds, excluding pension reserve, plus the balance on unrestricted funds) is £21,345,590 of which £1,584,086 is free reserves (that is, total funds less the amount held in fixed assets and restricted funds).

The current level of reserves is above our target level of at least 5% of incoming resources.

The COVID-19 restrictions did not impact the Trust's reserves. Trust Schools added to their reserves or were able to invest additional monies into their capital programmes over the 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 Summer holiday period.

Investment Policy

All funds are held on deposit with Lloyds Bank. All funds surplus to immediate requirements are invested to optimal effect by the Trust by the Bank with the objective of ensuring maximum return on assets invested but with minimal risk.

Where cash flow allows, sums have been invested on deposit for extended periods with the Trust's principal bankers.

Fundraising

The academy trust does not use any external fundraisers. All fundraising undertaken during the year was monitored by the Trustees.

Energy and Carbon Reporting

The Trust is currently not statutorily required to report on its energy usage and carbon footprint. The Trust is however monitoring this closely and is actively striving to reduce energy reliance and progress towards decarbonisation. One of the Trust's schools already utilises a ground source heat pump to heat one of its buildings and is looking to expand this to other nearby buildings. A rolling programme of LED replacement lighting is also underway, with the previously available Government funding being utilised to help with this replacement project.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The Trust strives to continually improve levels of attainment and progress for all children and, particularly, to secure equity for the most vulnerable.

The Trust's plans for future periods are:

1. Educational Excellence

To deliver outstanding teaching and learning across all schools, enhancing education for the public good.

2. Leadership and Governance

To sustain strong leadership and effective governance across the trust.

3. Financial Sustainability and Growth

To maintain financial health and explore sustainable growth.

4. Wellbeing and Community Engagement

To prioritise the wellbeing of students, staff, and the wider school community.

5. Digital Transformation and Innovation

To embrace technology and innovation to enhance teaching, learning, and administration.

FUNDS HELD AS CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

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

AUDITOR

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

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

The Trustees report, incorporating a strategic report has been approved by order of the Board of Trustees on and signed on its behalf by:

C King

Care King 13 Dec 2024 10:36:03 GMT (UTC +0)

C King
Chair of the Board

13 December 2024

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of Responsibility

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

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

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive, 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 Mill Academy and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees, including all Committees, any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that information that is described in the Trustees' Report and in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement. The Board of Trustees have formally met six times during the period ended 31 August 2024. Attendance during the period at meetings of the Board was as follows:

Board of Trustees

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
C King (Chair)	6	6
W Hemmingsley (Chief Executive)	6	6
C Mitchell	6	6
C Laing	0	6
K Black	4	6
L Williams	4	6

Finance and Resources Committee (incorporating Risk and Audit Committee)

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
C Mitchell (Chair)	5	5
K Black	4	5
C King	4	5
C Laing	4	5
In attendance but not members of the Committee		
W Hemmingsley (Accounting Officer)	4	5
N Stretton (Chief Finance Officer)	5	5
T Parsons (Finance Manager)	1	1

Conflict of Interest

The Trust maintains a register of interests for its Trustees, Members, Local Committee Volunteers and Senior Executive staff. Annual completion of pecuniary interest declarations is managed by the Governance Professional. Declarations of conflict of interest is required at each Board and/or Committee meeting and is a standing item at the start of each meeting agenda. Trustees or Committee members will decide at each meeting that a conflict is declared, if the person(s) should stay or leave the meeting for the relevant item, the Chair having the deciding vote in the event of a disagreement.

Governance reviews

The governance arrangements for The Henry Box School were replaced by the new governance for The Mill Academy on 1 October 2015. The governance arrangements include maintaining a Local Committee for each of the schools in the Trust. The Board agrees a schemes of delegation for the Trust as a whole, along with individual Terms of Reference for each Local Committee and its own committees.

The Trust continues to identify areas of weakness or gaps on the Board, and previously used the Academy Ambassadors programme but now use LinkedIn, jobs boards and recently Trustees Unlimited to recruit to Trustee vacancies. During 2023/24 there have been some Trustee changes, but the numbers of Trustees on the Board has been maintained for several years. In 2023/24 the Board operated with a Finance and Resources Committee which incorporated the Risk and Audit Committee. The current Trustees are clear on the skills they need on the Board, and they have successfully used their skills assessments to recruit new Trustees during the academic year. The Board annually review their schemes of delegations with updates already in place for the start of the year 2024/25.

Review of Value for Money

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

The Accounting Officer considers how the Trust 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 Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- The avoidance of waste and extravagance;
- The prudent and economical administration of the organisation;
- The establishment and maintenance of a system of financial governance, including sound internal spending controls, keeping up to date financial records, continuous financial monitoring and timely reporting; and
- Ensuring financial transactions represent value for money.

Our guiding principles for ensuring best value for money can be summarised as:

- Rigorous procedures for establishing, reviewing and evaluating Trust and school budgets, including comparisons against national good practice and benchmarking;
- A rigorous purchasing policy, ensuring value for money comparisons for purchased items;
- Rigorous evaluations of impact on student outcomes including examination results, value added progress, student attendance, transition and parental engagement;
- Sharing good practice amongst collaborative schools.

The Trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during the academic year because the Trustees and school leadership teams apply the principles of best value when making decisions about:

- The allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the school;
- The targeting of resources to best improve standards and quality of provision;
- The use of resources, including the management of buildings and estates, to best support the various educational needs and wellbeing of all students.

The pursuit of minor improvements or savings is not cost effective if the administration involves substantial time and/or costs. Time wasted on minor improvements or savings can also distract leaders from more important or valuable areas; therefore, Trustees and school leaders **do not** waste time and resources:

- On investigating minor areas where few improvements can be achieved;
- To make minor savings in costs;
- Seeking tenders for minor supplies and services.

Trustees and school leaders do:

- Make comparisons with other/similar schools using data provided by central government and other appropriate bodies, e.g. quality of teaching and learning, levels of expenditure;
- Challenge proposals. Examining them for effectiveness, efficiency and cost, e.g. setting annual student achievement targets;
- Require suppliers to compete on grounds of cost, and quality/suitability of services/products/backup;
- Consult individuals and organisations of quality/suitability of service we provide to parents and students, and services we receive from providers, e.g. the on-line payment system, website;
- Ensure preventative and regular estates maintenance is in place to reduce costly repair and replacement works.

This will apply in particular to:

Staffing

Trustees and leaders deploy staff to provide best value in terms of quality of teaching, quality of learning, adult-student ratio and curriculum management.

Teaching

Trustees, local committee volunteers and leaders review the quality of curriculum provision and quality of teaching, to provide students with a curriculum which meets their needs in order to best prepare them for the next stage of their learning journey.

Learning

Trustees, local committee volunteers and leaders review the quality of student learning in order to provide teaching which enables students to achieve above nationally expected progress e.g. setting of annual student achievement targets; investment in professional development and systems which allow teachers to focus on learning.

Use of Premises

Trustees and leaders consider the allocation and use of teaching areas, support areas and communal areas, to provide the best and safest environment for teaching and learning, for support services, and for communal access to central resources.

Use of Resources

Trustees and leaders deploy equipment, materials and services to provide students and staff with resources which support quality of teaching and quality of learning. The Trust benefits from utilising a Finance and Resources Committee and employs a centralised finance team, which supports staff in its schools to deploy resources in the most efficient manner, including the management of buildings and estates.

Purchasing

Trustees and leaders have procedures in place for assessing need and obtaining goods and services which provide "best value" in terms of suitability, efficiency, time and cost. These include:

- A competitive tendering procedure for goods and services above £25,000,
- Three written quotes for goods and services between £6,000 and £25,000,
- Tender exercises are undertaken to ensure that high value contracts are assessed against the marketplace to ensure that long term contracts (3 to 5 years) remain competitive,
- Procedures for accepting "best value" quotes which are not necessarily the cheapest (e.g. suitability for purpose and quality of workmanship),
- Procedures to minimise office time by the purchase of goods or services under £1,500 direct from reliable suppliers (e.g. stationery, small equipment),
- An annual budget prepared in line with the needs identified within School Improvement Plans
- Regular monitoring and review of all aspects of finance with Headteachers, at the Board and at the Finance and Resources Committee.

Income Generation and Surplus Balances

Trustees and leaders explore every opportunity to generate income through various means such as the hiring of Trust facilities and the selling of training and consultation time.

Student Welfare

Trustees and leaders review the quality of the school environment and the school ethos, in order to provide a supportive environment conducive to learning and achievement. Safeguarding procedures are in place and tested to ensure they are robust and preventative measures and training provision built into budgetary estimates.

Health and Safety and Estates Management

Trustees and leaders review the quality of the school environment and equipment, carrying out risk assessments where appropriate, in order to provide a safe working environment for students, staff and visitors.

Monitoring of these areas for best value took place:

- Internal quality assurance by leaders and leadership teams in schools e.g. through quality assurance procedures;
- In the Annual Budget Planning process and the preparation of the Annual Accounts;
- In Trust and School Improvement Plans;
- Through the analysis of internal student/pupil performance data including statutory performance data;
- Through the analysis of student performance data;
- Through the analysis of financial data, including benchmarking;
- In stakeholder surveys;
- Use of industry and government guidance, support and best practice, including Good Estates Management guidance.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

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

Capacity to Handle Risk

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

The Risk and Control Framework

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

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

The Board of Trustees appointed Bishop Fleming as its internal auditor for 2023/24 to ensure a separation of duties from the External Auditor as required by the Academy Trust Handbook. The Finance and Resources Committee incorporated the responsibilities of the Risk and Audit Committee in 2023/24 and set out specific terms

of reference to monitor compliance with internal assurance work, set areas for examination by the internal auditor and monitor the risk management policy.

Bishop Fleming's role includes giving advice on financial matters, where requested, and performing a range of checks on the Trust's financial and non-financial systems to provide the Trustees with the assurance they need.

Bishop Fleming delivered their schedule of work over a programme of three separate audits during the year. These reports have been considered and management responses provided where appropriate by the Risk and Audit Committee, Trustees and Leadership in a timely manner. No significant weaknesses or discrepancies have been highlighted and the Trust has (or is in the process of) implementing the recommendations and/or good practice advice.

Review of Effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. During the period ended 31 August 2024 the review has been informed by:

- the work of the internal auditor;
- the work of the external auditor;
- a financial management self-assessment process;
- the work of the Chief Finance Officer and the Finance Manager within the Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

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

13 December 2024

13 December 2024

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees on _____

and signed on its behalf by:

C King

Clara King 13 Dec 2024 10:38:03 GMT (UTC +0)

W Hemmingsley

Wendy Hemmingsley 13 Dec 2024 10:38:17 GMT (UTC +0)

C King
Chair of the Board

W Hemmingsley
Accounting Officer

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

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

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

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

W Hemmingsley

Wendy Hemmingsley 13 Dec 2024 10:38:17 GMT (UTC +0)

.....
W Hemmingsley
Accounting Officer

Date: 13 December 2024

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C King

Claire King 13 Dec 2024 10:36:03 GMT (UTC +0)

.....
C King

Chair of the Board

Date: 13 December 2024

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
MILL ACADEMY**

Opinion

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

In our opinion the financial statements:

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

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

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.

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of trustees

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

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

The specific procedures for this engagement that we designed and performed to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud, were as follows:

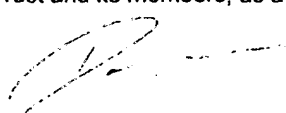
- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims;
- Enquiry of entity staff in compliance functions to identify any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Reviewing internal audit reports;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work to address the risk of irregularities due to management 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 evidence of 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 is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

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

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable Trust's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable Trust'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 Trust and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Darren O'Connor BSc (Hons) FCCA ACA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of
James Cowper Kreston Audit
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
2 Chawley Park
Cumnor Hill
Oxford
Oxfordshire
OX2 9GG

Date: 13 December 2024

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY TO THE MILL ACADEMY AND THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY

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

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

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

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

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

Approach

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

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

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

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

Specific work undertaken to draw our conclusion includes:

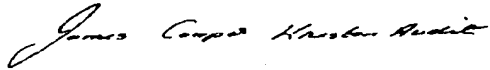
- reviewing the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees and other evidence made available to us, relevant to our consideration of regularity;
- a review of the objectives and activities of the academy, with reference to the income streams and other information available to us as auditors of the academy;
- testing of a sample of payroll payments to staff;
- testing of a sample of payments to suppliers and other third parties;
- testing of a sample of grants received and other income streams.

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Conclusion

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



James Cowper Kreston Audit
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor

2 Chawley Park
Cumnor Hill
Oxford
Oxfordshire
OX2 9GG

Date: 13 December 2024

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	4	-	30,401	33,545	63,946	115,052
Other trading activities	6	218,890	-	-	218,890	237,615
Investments	7	28,268	-	-	28,268	5,996
Charitable activities	5	21,991	8,878,752	-	8,900,743	8,442,534
Total income		269,149	8,909,153	33,545	9,211,847	8,801,197
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds		350	-	-	350	350
Charitable activities	9	122,650	9,115,140	683,317	9,921,107	9,388,902
Total expenditure	8	123,000	9,115,140	683,317	9,921,457	9,389,252
Net income/(expenditure)		146,149	(205,987)	(649,772)	(709,610)	(588,055)
Transfers between funds	18	-	(50,000)	50,000	-	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		146,149	(255,987)	(599,772)	(709,610)	(588,055)
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	24	-	413,000	-	413,000	1,186,000
Net movement in funds		146,149	157,013	(599,772)	(296,610)	597,945
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		1,437,937	(338,642)	20,542,905	21,642,200	21,044,255
Net movement in funds		146,149	157,013	(599,772)	(296,610)	597,945
Total funds carried forward		1,584,086	(181,629)	19,943,133	21,345,590	21,642,200

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

The notes on pages 31 to 59 form part of these financial statements.

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 08060721

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	15	20,869,595	21,008,244
		<u>20,869,595</u>	<u>21,008,244</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	16	206,845	192,498
Cash at bank and in hand		1,421,235	1,875,088
		<u>1,628,080</u>	<u>2,067,586</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(837,085)	(746,630)
Net current assets		<u>790,995</u>	<u>1,320,956</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>21,660,590</u>	<u>22,329,200</u>
Net assets excluding pension liability		<u>21,660,590</u>	<u>22,329,200</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	24	(315,000)	(687,000)
Total net assets		<u>21,345,590</u>	<u>21,642,200</u>
Funds of the Trust			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	18	19,943,133	20,542,905
Restricted income funds	18	133,371	348,358
		<u>20,076,504</u>	<u>20,891,263</u>
Restricted funds excluding pension liability	18	20,076,504	20,891,263
Pension reserve	18	(315,000)	(687,000)
Total restricted funds	18	<u>19,761,504</u>	<u>20,204,263</u>
Unrestricted income funds	18	<u>1,584,086</u>	<u>1,437,937</u>
Total funds		<u>21,345,590</u>	<u>21,642,200</u>

The financial statements on pages 28 to 59 were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and are signed on their behalf, by:

C King

Clare King 13 Dec 2024 10:36:03 GMT (UTC +0)

.....
C King

(Chair of the Board)

Date: 13 December 2024

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	20	62,547	311,895
Cash flows from investing activities	21	(516,400)	(170,115)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(453,853)	141,780
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		1,875,088	1,733,308
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	22, 23	<u>1,421,235</u>	<u>1,875,088</u>

The notes on pages 31 to 59 form part of these financial statements

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

1. General information

The Academy is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in the United Kingdom. The registered office address is shown on page 1.

The members of the Academy are as set out on page 1. In the event of the Academy being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member of the Academy.

2. 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.

2.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

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

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

2.2 Going concern

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

2.3 Income

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

• **Grants**

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

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

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

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.3 Income (continued)

- **Donations**

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

- **Other income**

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

2.4 Expenditure

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

- **Expenditure on raising funds**

This includes all expenditure incurred by the 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 Trust's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the Trust apportioned to charitable activities.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

2.5 Interest receivable

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

2.6 Taxation

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

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

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.7 Tangible fixed assets

Assets costing £500 or more are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

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

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

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Leasehold land	- Over the term of the lease
Buildings	- 2.5% Straight line
Computer equipment	- 33% Straight line
Fixtures & fittings	- 25% Straight line
Motor vehicles	- 12.5% Straight line

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

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

2.8 Debtors

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

2.9 Cash at bank and in hand

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

2.10 Liabilities

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

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.11 Financial instruments

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

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 16. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

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

Financial liabilities - trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 17. 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.

2.12 Operating leases

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

2.13 Pensions

The Trust operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Trust to the fund in respect of the year.

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

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

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

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

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.14 Fund accounting

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

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

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

3. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The 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 24, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2024. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

Critical areas of judgment:

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated over their useful lives taking into account residual values, where appropriate. The actual lives of the assets and residual values are assessed annually and may vary depending on a number of factors. Residual value assessments consider issues such as the remaining life of the asset and projected disposal values.

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

4. Income from donations and capital grants

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Donations and other voluntary income	30,401	-	30,401	11,230
Capital grants	-	33,545	33,545	103,822
Total 2024	30,401	33,545	63,946	115,052
Total 2023	11,230	103,822	115,052	

5. Funding for the Academy's educational activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
DfE/ESFA grants				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	7,806,776	7,806,776	7,391,021
Other DfE/ESFA grants				
Pupil Premium	-	281,626	281,626	282,471
Universal Infant Free School Meals	-	16,465	16,465	27,998
Primary PE and Sport Premium	-	34,190	34,190	34,320
COVID-19 Recovery Premium	-	59,067	59,067	59,385
COVID-19 School Led Tutoring Grant	-	8,010	8,010	21,944
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	469,865	469,865	359,462
	-	8,675,999	8,675,999	8,176,601
Local authority				
Household Support Fund	-	42,300	42,300	42,330
Other local authority grants	-	160,453	160,453	205,120
	-	202,753	202,753	247,450
Other income from the academy trust's educational operations	21,991	-	21,991	18,483
Total 2024	21,991	8,878,752	8,900,743	8,442,534
Total 2023	18,483	8,424,051	8,442,534	

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

6. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Other income	2,040	2,040	11,174
Lettings income	50,167	50,167	42,951
Income from other educational activities	166,683	166,683	183,490
Total 2024	<u>218,890</u>	<u>218,890</u>	<u>237,615</u>
Total 2023	<u>237,615</u>	<u>237,615</u>	

7. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Interest income	28,268	28,268	5,996
Total 2023	<u>5,996</u>	<u>5,996</u>	

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

8. Expenditure

	Staff Costs 2024 £	Premises 2024 £	Other 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Expenditure on fundraising trading activities:	-	-	350	350	350
Activities:					
Direct costs	5,743,994	509,482	898,533	7,152,009	6,655,079
Support costs	1,522,971	497,972	748,155	2,769,098	2,733,823
Total 2024	<u>7,266,965</u>	<u>1,007,454</u>	<u>1,647,038</u>	<u>9,921,457</u>	<u>9,389,252</u>
Total 2023	<u>6,837,301</u>	<u>946,415</u>	<u>1,605,536</u>	<u>9,389,252</u>	

9. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2024 £	Support costs 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Educational operations	7,152,009	2,769,098	9,921,107	9,388,902
Total 2024	<u>7,152,009</u>	<u>2,769,098</u>	<u>9,921,107</u>	<u>9,388,902</u>
Total 2023	<u>6,655,079</u>	<u>2,733,823</u>	<u>9,388,902</u>	

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

9. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

Analysis of direct costs

	Activities 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Pension finance costs	36,000	36,000	74,000
Staff costs	5,740,633	5,740,633	5,396,427
Depreciation	683,317	683,317	673,230
Technology	-	-	14,505
Educational supplies	229,255	229,255	70,408
Examination fees	102,092	102,092	107,279
Staff development	20,771	20,771	16,839
Educational consultancy	45,870	45,870	35,809
Other direct costs	294,071	294,071	266,582
Total 2024	<u><u>7,152,009</u></u>	<u><u>7,152,009</u></u>	<u><u>6,655,079</u></u>
Total 2023	<u><u>6,655,079</u></u>	<u><u>6,655,079</u></u>	

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

9. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

Analysis of support costs

	Activities 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Staff costs	1,429,481	1,429,481	1,384,211
Technology costs	171,075	171,075	126,256
Recruitment and support	64,493	64,493	61,827
Maintenance of premises	329,486	329,486	278,783
Maintenance of equipment	45,488	45,488	39,051
Cleaning	112,056	112,056	71,487
Rent and rates	56,430	56,430	89,369
Energy	108,073	108,073	115,173
Insurance	38,057	38,057	35,129
Security	5,942	5,942	4,747
Transport	5,348	5,348	6,951
Catering	203,114	203,114	181,461
Bank interest and charges	399	399	393
Travel and subsistence	1,713	1,713	1,888
Agency costs	112,289	112,289	97,558
Legal and professional	56,014	56,014	73,049
Apprenticeship levy	11,660	11,660	10,059
Other support costs	17,980	17,980	156,431
Total 2024	2,769,098	2,769,098	2,733,823
Total 2023	2,733,823	2,733,823	

10. Net income/(expenditure)

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2024 £	2023 £
Operating lease rentals	15,443	12,771
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	683,317	673,230
Fees paid to auditor for:		
- audit	13,800	13,000
- other services	2,160	2,050

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

11. Staff

a. Staff costs and employee benefits

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	5,354,056	5,003,458
Social security costs	532,420	490,277
Pension costs	1,283,638	1,286,903
	<u>7,170,114</u>	<u>6,780,638</u>
Apprenticeship levy	11,660	10,059
Staff restructuring costs (redundancy and severance payments)	5,084	1,500
Supply teacher costs	80,107	45,104
	<u><u>7,266,965</u></u>	<u><u>6,837,301</u></u>

Non-statutory/non-contractual staff severance payments

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

b. Staff numbers

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

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Teachers	84	86
Administration and support	83	85
Management	5	5
	<u><u>172</u></u>	<u><u>176</u></u>

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

11. Staff (continued)

b. Staff numbers (continued)

The average headcount expressed as full-time equivalents was:

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Teachers	74	72
Administration and support	55	55
Management	5	5
	<u>134</u>	<u>132</u>

c. Higher paid staff

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

	2024 No.	2023 No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	7	-
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	9	1
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	1	2
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	2	-
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	-	1
In the band £130,001 - £140,000	1	-
	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>

Some of the above employees participated in the Teachers' Pension Scheme. During the year ended 31 August 2024, pension contributions for these staff members amounted to £203,171 (2023: £66,446).

d. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Trust comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of key management personnel benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Trust was £604,292 (2023 - £554,335).

THE MILL ACADEMY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

12. Central services

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

- School improvement personnel and support
- HR support and advice
- IT personnel and support
- Financial support and systems
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing support and advice
- Governance and administrative advice and support
- Services purchased centrally such as insurance, IT licensing and payroll
- Facilities and Business Management

The Trust's Central Services annual budget is recharged on the basis of actual consumption, for example cost per employee for HR and payroll; or in some cases as a % based on pupil numbers in each school. The Trust does not use a flat % top-slice and does not budget to build a reserve of central funds, as the Trust believes that funds are better utilised within the academies themselves.

The Central Services budget was underspent in previous years and therefore an unintentional surplus on the central fund arose. The recharges to all schools in 2023/24 was adjusted to redistribute this surplus back to them. A further redistribution is planned for 2024/25 to further reduce the central fund reserve.

The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
The Henry Box School	574,496	611,200
Finstock C.E. Primary School	39,699	58,200
Queen Emma's Primary School	116,675	193,250
Total	730,870	862,650

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

13. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

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

		2024 £	2023 £
W Hemmingsley	Remuneration	120,000 - 125,000	110,000 - 115,000
	Pension contributions paid	30,000 - 35,000	25,000 - 30,000

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

14. Trustees' and Officers' insurance

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Trust has purchased insurance to protect Trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy business. The insurance provides cover up to £5,000,000 on any one claim and the cost for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £58 (2023 - £69). The cost of this insurance is included in the total insurance cost.

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

15. Tangible fixed assets

	Long-term leasehold property £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Motor vehicles £	Total £
Cost or valuation					
At 1 September 2023	25,573,458	372,221	950,667	15,175	26,911,521
Additions	445,765	44,892	54,011	-	544,668
Disposals	-	-	(56,052)	-	(56,052)
At 31 August 2024	26,019,223	417,113	948,626	15,175	27,400,137
Depreciation					
At 1 September 2023	4,890,629	267,766	729,957	14,925	5,903,277
Charge for the year	509,482	45,523	128,062	250	683,317
On disposals	-	-	(56,052)	-	(56,052)
At 31 August 2024	5,400,111	313,289	801,967	15,175	6,530,542
Net book value					
At 31 August 2024	20,619,112	103,824	146,659	-	20,869,595
At 31 August 2023	20,682,829	104,455	220,710	250	21,008,244

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15. Tangible fixed assets (continued)

The Academy took out a 125 year lease over the land and buildings located at the Henry Box School and transferred from Oxfordshire County Council at the original date of conversion to a standalone academy in 2012. In addition, the 90 year lease that already existed between Oxfordshire County Council and the Witney Educational Foundation was assigned to the Trust on the date of conversion. The land and buildings transferred and assigned at conversion have been valued at an estimate of their fair value at conversion. In determining this value, the Trustees have referred to the desktop valuation of the land and buildings commissioned by the ESFA as at 31 March 2013.

This desktop valuation was undertaken by Kier (previously Mouchel) and was carried out on a depreciated replacement cost basis. Included in the value of land and buildings is land at a value of £6,483,000.

During 2015, Finstock C.E. Primary School and Queen Emma's Primary School joined the multi-academy trust.

The Trust took out a 125 year lease over the land and buildings located at Queen Emma's Primary School transferred from Oxfordshire County Council.

Finstock C.E. Primary School occupies land and buildings which are owned by the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education. Supplemental Agreements are in place between the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance and the Trust, which provide the Trust with the right to use the land and buildings for Finstock C.E. Primary School. In addition, Finstock School has a 20 year lease with the Finstock Parish Council for land encompassing the school field.

The land and buildings transferred and assigned have been valued at an estimate of their fair value. In determining this value, the Trustees have referred to the desktop valuations of the land and buildings commissioned by the ESFA as at 31 March 2016.

These desktop valuations were undertaken by Kier (previously Mouchel) and were carried out on a depreciated replacement cost basis. The valuation for Finstock C.E. Primary School was £1,256,000 (including land at a value of £547,000). The valuation for Queen Emma's Primary School was £2,487,000 (including land at a value of £631,000).

16. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	12,915	13,298
Other debtors	77,636	55,629
Prepayments and accrued income	116,294	123,571
	<u>206,845</u>	<u>192,498</u>

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17. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	368,630	333,686
Other taxation and social security	114,909	114,450
Other creditors	161,765	132,601
Accruals and deferred income	191,781	165,893
	<u>837,085</u>	<u>746,630</u>

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

18. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2024 £
Unrestricted funds						
General Funds - all funds	1,437,937	269,149	(123,000)	-	-	1,584,086
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	340,500	7,806,776	(7,971,915)	(50,000)	-	125,361
Pupil premium	-	281,626	(281,626)	-	-	-
Universal Infant Free School Meals	-	16,465	(16,465)	-	-	-
Primary PE and Sport Premium	-	34,190	(34,190)	-	-	-
COVID-19 Recovery / Catch Up Premium	-	59,067	(59,067)	-	-	-
COVID-19 School Led Tutoring Grant	7,858	8,010	(7,858)	-	-	8,010
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	469,865	(469,865)	-	-	-
Local authority - Household Support Fund	-	42,300	(42,300)	-	-	-
Other local authority grants	-	160,453	(160,453)	-	-	-
Donations	-	30,401	(30,401)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(687,000)	-	(41,000)	-	413,000	(315,000)
	(338,642)	8,909,153	(9,115,140)	(50,000)	413,000	(181,629)
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Other capital grants fund	791,379	-	-	-	-	791,379
DfE/ESFA capital grants	1,395,905	33,545	(33,545)	-	-	1,395,905

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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18. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2024 £
Capital from GAG and other funds	380,922	-	-	50,000	-	430,922
Assets transferred on conversion	17,969,699	-	(644,772)	-	-	17,324,927
Donations	5,000	-	(5,000)	-	-	-
	<u>20,542,905</u>	<u>33,545</u>	<u>(683,317)</u>	<u>50,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>19,943,133</u>
Total Restricted funds	<u>20,204,263</u>	<u>8,942,698</u>	<u>(9,798,457)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>413,000</u>	<u>19,761,504</u>
Total funds	<u>21,642,200</u>	<u>9,211,847</u>	<u>(9,921,457)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>413,000</u>	<u>21,345,590</u>

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18. Statement of funds (continued)

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

Unrestricted funds

General fund represents income generated by the academy (such as lettings and hire of facilities) and any other donations or investment income, which is not restricted for any specific purpose and can be spent as determined by the Governing Body.

Restricted funds

The General Annual Grant (GAG) represents funding received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency during the period in order to fund the continuing activities of the school. Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the Trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG that it could carry forward at 31 August 2024.

Local Authority and other DfE/ESFA grants represent money given to the Trust by the local authority and the Education and Skills Funding Agency, including the High Needs grant and funding for looked after children.

Donations represent money given to the Trust by donors for specific fundraising ventures. Restrictions are imposed by the donor and the money will be spent on the relevant project.

The pension reserve represents the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) deficit which has been created to separately identify the pension deficit inherited from the local authority upon conversion to academy status, and through which all the pension scheme movements are recognised. The pension liability has not crystallised and the trustees do not need to designate any of their existing funds to meet future pension commitments. Parliament, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, has guaranteed that in the event of academy closure, outstanding LGPS liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013.

Fixed asset funds

Other capital grants represent funds given to the Trust through donations for specific capital purposes which were unspent at 31 August 2024.

DfE/ESFA capital grants included devolved capital funding and amounts received from the Condition Improvement Fund.

Capital from GAG and other funds represents amounts spent on fixed assets from the GAG funding received from the ESFA or from unrestricted funds.

Assets transferred on conversion represent the land and buildings and equipment donated to the school from Oxfordshire County Council on conversion to an academy.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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18. Statement of funds (continued)

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

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
Unrestricted funds						
General Funds - all funds	1,299,406	262,094	(123,563)	-	-	1,437,937
Restricted funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	289,363	7,391,021	(7,311,688)	(28,196)	-	340,500
Pupil premium	-	282,471	(282,471)	-	-	-
Universal Infant Free School Meals	-	27,998	(27,998)	-	-	-
Primary PE and Sport Premium	-	34,320	(34,320)	-	-	-
COVID-19 Recovery / Catch Up Premium	11,926	59,385	(71,311)	-	-	-
COVID-19 School Led Tutoring Grant	18,070	21,944	(32,156)	-	-	7,858
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	359,462	(359,462)	-	-	-
Local authority - Household Support Fund	-	42,330	(42,330)	-	-	-
Other local authority grants	-	205,120	(205,120)	-	-	-
Donations	3,373	11,230	(14,603)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(1,662,000)	-	(211,000)	-	1,186,000	(687,000)
	<u>(1,339,268)</u>	<u>8,435,281</u>	<u>(8,592,459)</u>	<u>(28,196)</u>	<u>1,186,000</u>	<u>(338,642)</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Other capital grants fund	791,379	-	-	-	-	791,379
DfE/ESFA capital grants	1,292,083	103,822	-	-	-	1,395,905

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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18. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
Capital from GAG and other funds	352,726	-	-	28,196	-	380,922
Assets transferred on conversion	18,642,929	-	(673,230)	-	-	17,969,699
Donations	5,000	-	-	-	-	5,000
	<u>21,084,117</u>	<u>103,822</u>	<u>(673,230)</u>	<u>28,196</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>20,542,905</u>
Total Restricted funds	<u>19,744,849</u>	<u>8,539,103</u>	<u>(9,265,689)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,186,000</u>	<u>20,204,263</u>
Total funds	<u>21,044,255</u>	<u>8,801,197</u>	<u>(9,389,252)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,186,000</u>	<u>21,642,200</u>

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were allocated as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
The Henry Box School	1,247,560	1,249,462
Finstock C.E. Primary School	187,049	161,220
Queen Emma's Primary School	200,971	196,683
Central costs	81,877	178,930
Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve	<u>1,717,457</u>	<u>1,786,295</u>
Restricted fixed asset fund	<u>19,943,133</u>	<u>20,542,905</u>
Pension reserve	<u>(315,000)</u>	<u>(687,000)</u>
Total	<u>21,345,590</u>	<u>21,642,200</u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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18. Statement of funds (continued)

Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
The Henry Box School	4,607,405	924,944	312,729	1,008,006	6,853,084	6,378,327
Finstock C.E Primary School	196,765	42,036	15,613	74,049	328,463	284,998
Queen Emma's Primary School	734,995	132,458	47,217	275,301	1,189,971	1,021,972
Central Costs	199,830	438,973	6,390	180,429	825,622	819,725
LGPS pension finance cost	37,639	3,361	-	-	41,000	211,000
Trust	5,776,634	1,541,772	381,949	1,537,785	9,238,140	8,716,022

19. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current period

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	926,462	-	19,943,133	20,869,595
Current assets	1,494,709	133,371	-	1,628,080
Creditors due within one year	(837,085)	-	-	(837,085)
Pension scheme liability	-	(315,000)	-	(315,000)
Total	1,584,086	(181,629)	19,943,133	21,345,590

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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19. Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior period

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	465,339	-	20,542,905	21,008,244
Current assets	1,719,228	348,358	-	2,067,586
Creditors due within one year	(746,630)	-	-	(746,630)
Pension scheme liability	-	(687,000)	-	(687,000)
Total	1,437,937	(338,642)	20,542,905	21,642,200

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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20. Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Net expenditure for the period (as per Statement of financial activities)	(709,610)	(588,055)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	683,317	673,230
Interest receivable	(28,268)	(5,996)
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	41,000	211,000
Increase in debtors	(14,347)	(39,953)
Increase in creditors	90,455	61,669
Net cash provided by operating activities	62,547	311,895

21. Cash flows from investing activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	28,268	5,996
Purchase of tangible assets	(544,668)	(176,111)
Net cash used in investing activities	(516,400)	(170,115)

22. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash in hand and at bank	1,421,235	1,875,088
Total cash and cash equivalents	1,421,235	1,875,088

23. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 September 2023 £	Cash flows £	At 31 August 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,875,088	(453,853)	1,421,235
	1,875,088	(453,853)	1,421,235

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24. Pension commitments

The Trust's employees belong to two principal pension schemes: the Teachers' Pension Scheme England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff; and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff, which is managed by Oxfordshire 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 of the LGPS 31 March 2022.

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

Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

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

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

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £939,025 (2023 - £822,428).

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

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

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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24. Pension commitments (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £437,000 (2023 - £419,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £340,000 (2023 - £329,000) and employees' contributions totalled £97,000 (2023 - £90,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 21.2 per cent for employers and 5.5-12.5 per cent for employees.

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

Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, to a guarantee that, in the event of academy closure, outstanding Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013.

Principal actuarial assumptions

	2024 %	2023 %
Rate of increase in salaries	2.65	3.00
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.65	3.00
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.00	5.20

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

	2024 Years	2023 Years
Retiring today		
Males	20.8	21.5
Females	24.3	25.0
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	21.9	23.0
Females	25.7	26.7

Sensitivity analysis

	2024 £000	2023 £000
Discount rate +0.1%	3,567	3,265
Discount rate -0.1%	3,504	3,207
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	3,923	3,613
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	3,620	3,334

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24. Pension commitments (continued)

Share of scheme assets

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Equities	5,245,920	4,536,720
Gilts	1,311,480	1,008,160
Property	655,740	630,100
Cash and other liquid assets	72,860	126,020
Total market value of assets	7,286,000	6,301,000

The actual return on scheme assets was £395,000 (2023 - £238,000).

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Current service cost	(345,000)	(466,000)
Interest cost	(370,000)	(329,000)
Interest income	334,000	255,000
Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities	(381,000)	(540,000)

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	6,988,000	7,556,000
Current service cost	345,000	466,000
Interest cost	370,000	329,000
Employee contributions	97,000	90,000
Actuarial gains	(18,000)	(1,258,000)
Benefits paid	(181,000)	(195,000)
At 31 August	7,601,000	6,988,000

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24. Pension commitments (continued)

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	6,301,000	5,894,000
Interest income	334,000	255,000
Actuarial (losses)/gains	395,000	(72,000)
Employer contributions	340,000	329,000
Employee contributions	97,000	90,000
Benefits paid	(181,000)	(195,000)
At 31 August	7,286,000	6,301,000

25. Operating lease commitments

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Not later than 1 year	29,733	15,443
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	42,956	28,946
	72,689	44,389

26. Members' liability

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

27. Related party transactions

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

No such related party transactions took place during the year.