

Company registration number 09666511 (England and Wales)

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

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THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Trustees

Eddie Austin (appointed Chair of Trustees 16.11.23)
Nicholas Gill* (appointed Vice Chair of Trustees 16.11.23)
Ian McGrath
Paul Eckley* (Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer,
Ex-Officio by virtue of office as Chief Executive Officer)
Stephanie Capon *
John Lomas
Neil Moseley* (Chair of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee)
Cole Andrew (appointed 01.10.24)

*Director members of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee

Members

Eddie Austin (appointed 21.12.23)
Deborah Rogers (appointed 21.12.23)
John Lomas
Sally Cheshire (appointed 08.07.24)
Lorraine Flynn (appointed 08.07.24)
Susan Gill (resigned 31.12.23)
Chi Boakye (resigned 31.12.23)

Executive Management Team

Chief Executive Officer
Executive Head of Chatsworth

Head of Pictor Academy
Head of Manor Academy
Executive Head of New Park Academy

Head of School Longford Park
Chief Financial Officer
Chief Information Officer
Chief Human Resources Officer
Estates and Communications Manager

Paul Eckley
Andrew Taylor (appointed 01.09.24)
Andrew Taylor (resigned 31.08.24) Joanne Williams (appointed
01.09.24)
Pam Symonds
Almut Bever-Warren
Zoe Fernandez (resigned 31.08.24) Sara Waite (appointed
01.09.24)
Lisa Hughes
Ian Green
Lisa-Marie McGrath
Rachel Hill (appointed 01.10.24)

Company name

The Sovereign Trust

Company registration number

09666511

Registered office

Manor Academy
Manor Avenue
Sale M33 5JX

Academies operated

Manor Academy
Pictor Academy
New Park Academy
Longford Park School

Location

Sale
Timperley
Eccles
Stretford

Principal

Pam Symonds
Joanne Williams
Almut Bever-Warren
Sara Waite

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS (CONTINUED)

Company secretary	Elderflower Legal & Secretarial Services Chestnut House 23 Ryles Park Road Macclesfield SK11 8AH
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Independent auditor	DJH Audit Limited Bridge House Ashley Road Hale Altrincham WA14 2UT
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Bankers	Lloyds Bank Plc 40-42 School Road Sale M33 7XL
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Solicitors	Bexley Beaumont Limited Centurion House 129 Deansgate Manchester M3 3WR
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THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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

The academy trust operated four academies in the year for pupils aged 3 to 19 serving a catchment area of Trafford, Salford and the surrounding boroughs. Its academies have a combined pupil capacity of 546 and had 558 on roll in September 2024. The trust has been successful in applying to open a Free School in Warrington, the opening date is due in September 2026. We are in the process of transferring Chatsworth School and Community College into The Sovereign Trust. This will be completed in October 2024.

Structure, governance and management

Constitution

The academy trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents of the academy trust. The trustees of The Sovereign Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company is known as The Sovereign Trust (company number (09666511)).

Details of the trustees who served throughout the year, and to the date these accounts are approved, are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on pages 1 and 2.

Members' liability

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

Trustees' indemnities

The academy trust has opted into the Department for Education's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA), an alternative to insurance where UK government funds cover losses that arise. This scheme protects trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy trust business, and provides cover up to £10,000,000.

Method of recruitment and appointment or election of trustees

Trustees are assessed based on the expertise, experience and skills required by the board in the discharge of their duties as representatives of the academy trust. New potential Trustees go through a thorough application process including a formal application and interview process. The members elect trustees and the board contains eight elected trustees who are appointed for a term of four years. There are currently 8 serving trustees.

No trustee received any remuneration in respect of their duties as a trustee from the academy trust during the year.

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees

Trustee training is taken very seriously by the academy trust. All new trustees are given the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills through various online resources, such as 'Governor hub', 'SSS learning' and the 'CST', that provides a regular update on topical educational matters and training. The academy trust provides an online trustees' resource that stores all current policies and procedures, as well as minutes of meetings and other information.

All new trustees are actively encouraged to take advantage of all the support on offer so as to gain a better understanding of the role and responsibilities of being a director. Additionally, trustees with specific roles within the board or advisory committee are strongly encouraged to undertake specific training tailored to their role.

Organisational structure

The trustees are responsible for setting general strategy, approving an annual development plan and budget, monitoring performance against the development plan and budget, monitoring the trust's academies, capital expenditure and senior leadership appointments and approval of the financial statements. The trustees, through the chief executive officer, also monitor the performance of the executive management team.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Three new members have been appointed during the year. They have a variety of skills to support the trust in its development. One member is a retired headteacher of a special school, one member has a wealth of knowledge working in trusts and monitoring finance and the final new member works across Greater Manchester supporting special schools deliver employability and supporting SEN students gain employment. She is involved with all schools in the trust. This now ensures the trust is compliant with the Academy Trust Handbook regarding members.

During 2023/2024, two members resigned due to work commitments. The day-to-day management of the academy trust has been delegated to the chief executive officer (who is also the accounting officer) and the executive management team.

The executive management team controls the academies at an executive level implementing the policies laid down by the trustees. Control is devolved to members of the executive management team within agreed limits through the scheme of delegation.

The trustees meet at least once each term to receive reports from the executive management team to manage strategic objectives. The Finance, Risk and Audit Committee meets separately from the main board meetings to discuss the financial position, the risk register and the system of internal controls for the academy trust.

The work of the board consists of:

- **Finance and risk**

Ensures the academy trust acts in accordance with the articles, funding agreements, vision, mission and values; and complies with relevant legislation, regulations, the Academy Trust Handbook and Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) guidance.

Exercise oversight and provide an independent objective view on the appropriateness, adequacy and effectiveness of the academy trust's risk management, financial management, and internal control and assurance arrangements including reviewing the financial statements.

- **Estates, health and safety**

To oversee the use of premises, grounds and extended academy facilities ensuring that the academy complies with health and safety guidelines, including appropriate external advice if required.

- **HR/staffing**

To be responsible for reviewing and agreeing staff provision, agreeing procedures for staff selection, appointment and performance management, contributing to the appraisal of the chief executive officer, reviewing and agreeing staff pay and training programs.

- **Audit**

The Finance, Risk and Audit Committee continues to meet as an advisory body to the board; it has no executive powers, but aims to promote the highest standards of propriety and governance around the use of public funds whilst encouraging proper accountability for the use of these funds.

The committee satisfies the statutory requirements for the use of public funds by reviewing the internal and external financial statements on behalf of the board and promotes a climate of financial discipline and internal control within the academy trust. The committee appoints and oversees the work from the internal and external auditors. It will also obtain independent professional advice if considered necessary.

- **Advisory committees**

Individual academy advisory committees meet termly and comprise all learning and other experiences that each academy provides for its pupils. Responsibilities for the curriculum are shared between the chief executive officer, heads of schools, the board of trustees, and the Secretary of State for Education and Skills Funding Agency. The advisory committee will have responsibility for monitoring test results and teaching of the curriculum including the review of the assessment policy, and all other policies relevant to curriculum, assessment and pupil progress and welfare.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Day-to-day management is delegated to the chief executive officer and individual headteachers along with their senior leadership teams.

The executive management team and senior leadership teams recognise that equal opportunities should be an integral part of good practice within the workplace. The academy trust aims to establish equal opportunity in all areas of its activities including creating working environments in which the contribution and needs of all people are fully valued.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key personnel

The trustees consider that they, together with executive management team comprise the key management personnel of the trust. The trustees give of their time freely and the pay and remuneration of the chief executive officer, heads of schools and senior staff is set by the remuneration committee advising the board of trustees and is kept under annual review via a robust performance management and appraisal system.

A number of criteria are used in setting pay;

- nature of the role and responsibilities;
- competitor salaries in the region; and
- the sector average salary for comparable positions.

Trade union facility time

Under the provisions of the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017, where an academy trust has more than 49 full time equivalent employees throughout any 7 months within the reporting period, it must include information included in Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

Relevant union officials

Number of Union officials	Full time equivalent employee number
9	433

Percentage of time spent on facility time

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	0
1% - 50%	9
51% - 99%	0
100%	0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Total cost of facility time	£1,472.77
Total pay bill	£10,690,506.00
Percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time	0.014%

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time	1.75%
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Related parties and other connected charities and organisations

Throughout the year, the academy trust has continued to develop partnerships with schools and academies both locally and nationally. The chief executive officer is a key member of the Confederation of Schools Trust, the Special School representative on Funding Forum and the High Needs Block funding committee.

The academy trust works with the Greater Manchester Challenge, a collective of nine local authorities and with the GM MAT Leaders group. As a trust, we work with local hospitals and Manchester Metropolitan University who form a base for our Manor College pupils on work placements.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

The Pictor Academy Parent, Staff and Friends Association and the Manor Academy Parent Teacher Association are both registered charities; set up to fundraise within The Sovereign Trust. New Park Academy Parent Teacher Association is not a registered charity but also raises money within the trust. Longford Park School does not have a PTA.

The members, trustees, senior staff and their families are regarded as related parties in accordance with the definition in the Charities SORP. All transactions with such parties are conducted in accordance with the academy financial regulations and procurement procedures.

Related Party – CS Services

Transactions with CS Services for 2023-24 were declared to the ESFA in July 2023. CS Services are a grounds maintenance company which is owned by a close relative of the CFO. In entering into the related party transaction, the academy trust has complied with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023.

Engagement with employees (including disabled persons)

The Sovereign Trust is an equal opportunity employer and proudly discloses this throughout its recruitment processes. The trust welcomes applications for employment from disabled persons.

The trust is responsive to changes to an employee's individual circumstances through becoming disabled, which includes making appropriate adjustments to working conditions. All employees of the trust including those with a disability can expect to be afforded development and career progression that befits their skills and expertise.

The trust acknowledges the trade unions that represent all of its employees. A Joint Consultative Committee comprising of trustees, senior leaders and employee union representatives is an established mechanism to consult employees on matters affecting their employment with the trust.

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

The directors of the trust pay close regard to developing and maintaining good business relationships with suppliers, customers and others in order to obtain best value from those services. Integrity and open communication are the attributes that the trust values and displays in all its relationships and therefore expects the same in return.

The trust aims to finalise payments to companies in good time, to have sound processes for tendering and obtaining quotes.

Objectives and activities

The principal objective and activity of the charitable company is the operation of The Sovereign Trust to ensure the clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction to provide education for pupils between the ages of 3 and 19 with a statement of special educational needs or an Education Health and Care Plan.

The trustees carry out the following duties:

- ensure compliance with the laws and regulations applicable to academy trusts;
- ensure the academy trust is managed efficiently and effectively including the employment of additional professional advice on matters where there is a material risk to the charity;
- overseeing the financial performance of the schools and making sure effective use of funds; and
- ensure the academy trust assets and resources are protected and used in the pursuit of the objectives, aims and public benefit of the academy trust. The trustees oversee the finances to make sure it remains solvent and keeps appropriate financial records as per the Academy Trust Handbook 2023.

Objects and aims

The academy trust's objects, as set out in its articles of association, are specifically restricted to the following:

- 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 schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum ("the mainstream academies") or educational institutions which are principally concerned with providing full-time or part-time education for children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless alternative provision is made for them ("the alternative provision academies") or 16 to 19 academies offering a curriculum appropriate to the needs of its students ("the 16 to 19 academies") or schools specially organised to make special educational provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs ("the special academies").

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

- b. To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of the areas in which the academies are situated 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 or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or 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.

Our vision

To be a centre of excellence for learning and development for pupils with special educational needs.

Our mission statement

The Sovereign Trust academies are listening, caring and learning communities; places where everyone is valued as an individual, where pupils can achieve their best through a challenging wider curriculum and an enjoyment in learning for life. Our academies will offer all pupils access to excellent and innovative education with Trust-wide collaboration providing opportunities for enriched learning and pathways to employment and independence. The Trust constantly looks to improve whilst ensuring its future viability and seeking growth through development and acquisitions.

Our values

The Sovereign Trust is a multi-academy trust and a family of schools who believe that by learning and growing together we can:

Respect	We value the diversity of our school communities and welcome all pupils to our academies. We remain vigilant in how we treat each other, ensuring respect of each other and the views of others.
Integrity	We work in a culture of trust, honesty and transparency with each other, ensuring every decision serves the pupils of the Trust equally.
Opportunity	We hold inclusion at the heart of everything we do, ensuring everyone is equally valued, and given equal opportunity to thrive.
Community	We foster a sense of community throughout the Trust and within our academies that supports both pupils and families in nurturing individual potential and the love of learning.
Enjoyment	We encourage fun and enjoyment in our curriculum that supports a positive learning environment.

Objectives, strategies and activities

The principal strategies of the academy trust are as follows:

- ensuring that each academy enables all pupils to achieve their own outstanding outcomes;
- establishing a culture in each academy where the central focus is on the success and well-being of each child;
- building a self-sustaining, system-led, collaborative approach to school improvement;
- ensure high quality, strong and passionate leadership and governance at all levels throughout the academy trust; and
- to strengthen the academy trust by growing our family of schools who share the academy trust's values.

Trustees and senior leaders in the trust led a trust wide consultation programme in order to develop a new strategic development plan (SDP).

Public benefit

The trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England & Wales. The trustees refer to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the academy trust's objectives and aims and in planning future activities for the year. The academy trust continues to be at the heart of its community, promoting community cohesion and sharing facilities with other schools and academies and the wider community.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Strategic report

Achievements and performance

The core business of the academy trust is the provision of high-quality education for pupils and learners with learning difficulties, the primary performance indicator for the Trust is the progress pupils and learners are making. During the academic year 2023-2024 pupils in all schools demonstrated consistently strong progress across all areas. This is supported by School improvement partner visits and reports, peer reviews, lesson observations and a quality assurance process

Additional challenges have been financial. The current financial pressures come on the back of no increases to the PAN funding since it was introduced in 2013, limited increases in Local Authority Top-Up funding and the failure of some Local Authorities to pass on money allocated to Specialist settings by Government, such as the Schools Supplementary Grant. As a result, Specialist settings have seen their buying power significantly eroded by inflation for the past ten years, leaving little, if any, room for further efficiencies or savings.

Furthermore, unfunded pay awards, the rising costs of fuel, food supplies and general day to day expenditure present pressures on school budgets.

The trustees are determined to maintain our ethos, values, standards and achievements, whilst continuing to work to fulfil our medium and longer-term development plans.

In order to maintain educational standards each academy in the trust applies the following strategies:

- **Manor Academy** - transitional pathways leading to fulfilling, contributory and worthwhile opportunities for all students as they progress into adulthood to drive the ethos, aims and curriculum.
- **New Park Academy** - building confidence in learning, developing pupils as respectful, tolerant and well-mannered citizens of the local and wider community is used to drive their ethos and aims, together with a challenging curriculum and supportive partnerships with home and wider services.
- **Pictor Academy** - the ethos, aims and curriculum are driven by supporting development through personalised learning opportunities with a focus on independence and communication.
- **Longford Park School** - offer structure and security through teaching matched to the abilities of their pupils. Many of the pupils need to experience success and praise. They envelop the children in a 'can do' ethos and provide an environment where the school motto is embraced by all - "Our children **believe** in themselves, and **belong** in a strong community, everyone is empowered to **become** the best they can be".

The achievements of our children and young people are outstanding overall across The Sovereign Trust because from very low starting points each student leaves with a range of skills and goes on to a range of opportunities. There is an expectation, in all core areas, that the majority of young people will engage in external accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 and 5.

OFSTED inspections

There has been three Ofsted inspection during the academic year.

In November 2023 New Park Academy was inspected by Ofsted and received a judgement of 'Good'. New Park was previously inspected in November 2016, when it was judged to be 'Inadequate' and as a result of a forced academisation joined the Sovereign Trust. This represents a huge improvement in standards at the school and is a testament to the hard work of the staff at New Park Academy and the support given by the Sovereign Trust.

In February 2024 Manor Academy was inspected by Ofsted and received a judgement of 'Good'. This maintains their previous judgement. Inspectors stated 'This is a welcoming and friendly school where pupils are known and celebrated as individuals. The school's vision to prepare pupils to become self-reliant, caring and responsible adults is at the heart of every aspect of school life. Pupils are listened to, respected and valued by staff. This helps them feel happy and safe.'

In April 2024 Longford Park School was inspected by Ofsted and received a judgement of 'Requires improvement'. A post Ofsted improvement plan has been drawn up to address the needs identified in the inspection. This is being fully supported by and the Trust, Advisors and school.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

In February 2019, Pictor Academy achieved a fourth 'Outstanding' judgement following a full Ofsted inspection. All of the academies were oversubscribed again throughout the year with demand for places far in excess of our published admission numbers.

The Free School in Warrington, to be known as 'Seymour Academy' is due to open in September 2026.

Key performance indicators

Financial sustainability

- Cost of staffing as a percentage of income is below 88% for all academies
- The academy trust operates at a break-even position
- Academy outruns are measured to established budgets and variances investigated
- Operational costs as a percentage of income are less than 99% in all academies

Leadership and governance development

- All academies within the trust are compliant with the requirements of Academies Financial Handbook.
- Leadership is rated as good or outstanding in all academies.

Attendance and pupil numbers

Attendance figures across the country have been lower than normal. There has clearly been an impact of teachers strikes. **The National Average attendance for Special schools for the year 2023/24 is 87%**

Pupil attendance percentages:

- Manor Academy Sale 90.47%
- New Park Academy 64.20%
- Longford park School 89.82%
- Pictor Academy 90.97%

All academies in the trust have full pupil numbers.

Achievement

- 90% of pupils achieve their individual targets
- 95% of teaching is judged good or better
- Phonics schemes have been implemented across all schools to help enhance access to all aspects of the curriculum

Growth of the trust

- Two further classrooms have been built at Longford Park School, using the SEN capital fund, thus increasing their capacity
- All academies within the trust are at maximum capacity pupil numbers
- All academies within the trust self-generate income above expenses

Safety, health and environment (SHE)

- SHE registers are up to date at all academies within the trust
- Conditional Improvement Fund Investments are made where required
- Fire and Risk audit has been completed in all academies across the trust
- Health and safety audits have been completed in all academies across the trust

Going concern

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

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Duty to promote the success of the company

The directors at the Sovereign Trust promote the success of the company for the benefit of all its stakeholders by:

- regularly reviewing a dashboard of key indicators that measure and illustrate staff and children's well-being;
- supporting growth of the trust by taking on new schools through sponsorship, request and engaging in the Free School programme in order to provide more SEND places in areas where there is lack of capacity;
- making key appointments on the board and Academy Advisory Committees (LGBs). Addressing under performance of the board;
- undertaking board effectiveness reviews and skills audits regularly which measure the extent of engagement with wider stakeholders and identify areas for improvement;
- undertaking discussion sessions on strategy and financial performance during 2023-24
- having a robust audit regime in place with review at Finance, Risk and Audit Committee;
- ongoing CPD available for directors and members;
- having key designated roles on the board that focus on strengths e.g. director responsible for estates (also a parent of a child in the trust) runs a large construction company, has built good relationships with contractors, suppliers and others;
- having a director who has previous experience at a high level of SEND education services, commissioning and strategy to ensure the board have a deeper understanding of public services and challenges; and
- having a director who is a qualified chartered accountant to be chair of the Finance, Risk and Audit committee.

Financial review

During the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 total incoming resources were £15.7m. The academy trust is primarily funded by grant income received from the ESFA and the local authorities. Total outgoing resources were £15.9m, including depreciation of £0.8m and FRS102 costs of £0.3m.

The academy trust has taken on the deficit in the Local Government Pension Scheme in respect of its non-teaching staff transferred on conversion. The pension asset/liability is incorporated within the statement of financial activities and balance sheet. The pension values at 31 August 2024 have been determined by the actuary which shows each academy in the trust having a pension asset. In accordance with applicable accounting standards, the asset values have been capped at an asset ceiling value of £nil on the basis that the asset is not deemed to be recoverable.

As at 31 August 2024 the value of net current assets was £2.2m. The assets were used exclusively for providing education and the associated support services to the pupils of the academies. Total funds held at the balance sheet date are £26.6m, being £24.4m of restricted fixed asset funds, £1.4m of restricted general funds and £0.8m of unrestricted general funds. The total movement in free revenue reserves is an in-year deficit of £0.1m.

There have been high levels of staff absence for various reasons, some have been long term and cover has been required. Difficulties have been experienced with recruitment and filling vacancies too and therefore supply has had to be used. Supply costs have increased throughout the year however they have been balanced with lower staff salary costs.

Each academy is focused on the success of their school development plans to enhance their quality of education after which is essential to ensure the future needs of our pupils are met.

Reserves policy

The policy of the academy trust is to carry forward a prudent level of reserves designed to meet the long-term cyclical needs of renewal and any unforeseen contingencies, subject to the constraint that the level of reserves does not exceed the level permitted by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. In addition, that the resources are primarily used to meet the needs of the pupils within the academies and therefore that any reserves are kept under review and are not deemed excessive.

No material funds have been designated in the annual accounts. The academy trust does not have tangible assets that could be released. No deficit fund balances are being carried within academy trust.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Total funds held at the balance sheet date are £26.6m, being £24.4m of restricted fixed asset funds, £1.4m of restricted general funds and £0.8m of unrestricted general funds. The academy trust's current level of free reserves (total funds excluding the fixed assets restricted fund and excluding the pension reserve) is £2,148,000 as at 31 August 2024. The total movement in free revenue reserves is an in-year deficit of £0.1m.

Investment policy

All surplus income is held centrally within the designated bank with Lloyds Bank account and accrues interest at the designated rate. The academy trust holds three higher interest short-term deposit accounts with Lloyds Bank where reserves are placed to maximise returns. The academy trust does not invest funds elsewhere or enter into any schemes e.g. equity bonds.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The major risks to which the academy trust is exposed, as identified by the trustees, have been reviewed, and systems and procedures have been established to mitigate those risks. There is a risk register that is regularly reviewed at Finance, Risk and Audit Committee meetings and subsequently at board meetings and any actions are agreed as required. The 'red risks' are listed below. All but the GMP pension fund risk are mitigated, the GMPF risk has been agreed, by the board, to carry.

Principal risks	Mitigation
Compliance risk There is a risk that the financial reporting requirements are not complied with leading to investigation by the ESFA /lack of support from ESFA for future growth because: - the regulatory/legislative requirements relating to the production and reporting of the Statutory Accounts are not known or complied with; - the regulatory/legislative requirements relating to Accounting Standards are not known or complied with; - the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) legislative requirements are not known or complied with.	• CFO and financial controller in place. • Finance Risk and Audit committee in place. • Monthly Financial Accounts/Reporting. • Budget monitoring. • Awareness of Financial Regulations. • Support of the Academies Finance staff and associated policies and procedures. • Effective Internal and External Audit. • 3 year financial forecasts. • Maintain effective relationship and build on with external accountants. • CEO to access training to increase awareness and develop understanding of required procedures. • Strengthen budget monitoring. • Complete draft financial procedures manual.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Principal risks	Mitigation
Finance risk There is a risk that the trust is unable to maintain overall financial viability leading to an inability to sustain our educational provision because of ineffective financial control policies, processes and operational control.	• Monthly financial accounts/reporting. • Budget monitoring reports. • Regular review by Finance and Risk Committee. • Board of directors agree a balanced budget. • Internal and external audits. • Review of the monthly financial position against budget. • Continued development of suitable control policies and processes to protect against financial loss. • Monitoring capital investment to ensure the academy trust maintains its physical assets. • Ensuring a clear supplier or third-party policy and a clear tender process to protect the academy trust financially. • Strengthen budget monitoring. • Strengthen internal audit.
There is a risk that the trust is unable to maintain overall financial viability (or has reduced funds to work with) leading to a reduction in education standards or closure because there is insufficient income generation.	• Audit current planned large spend. • Re-arrange/postpone/cancel the planned spends. • ESFA financial support. • Ensure reserves cover salaries that are dependent on external income. • Share trust wide reserves for those schools facing particular hardship • Centralise banking across the Trust to ease potential movement of funds to support short term cash flow pressures in some schools.
There is a risk that the Academy buildings deteriorate making them unsuitable for pupils and staff, leading to the academy having to close because of inadequate funding from ESFA.	• Site Manager inspections. • Annual H&S audits by Trafford. • Fire risk assessment audit by Trafford. • Asbestos management survey/ management plan. • Inspection audit by Sport Safe of internal sports equipment. • Inspection by Sovereign Play of External play equipment. • External audit and assessment to support funding bids (E3 Cube). • Emergency funding bid. • Project and capital spend monitoring.
There is a risk of significant financial shortfall leading to critical operational difficulties for the trust because of failing to make provision for pension contingent liability and monitoring the performance of the GMPF pension scheme.	• Financial policies and procedures operated by the trust. • Financial regulations. • Ill Health Strain Insurance in place (April 2016). • Secretary of State guarantee to support pension failures.
Governance risk There is a risk that performance (financial and non-financial) across the academies isn't monitored or challenged by the SLT or board directors leading to poor performance, financial loss or noncompliance because the management information is inadequate, out of date or ill informed.	• Regular reporting and review of performance. • SLT Review processes. • Advice from the ESFA. • Advice and support from external accountants. • Embed CFO role. • Review strategic planning, objective setting & budgeting processes.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Principal risks	Mitigation
People risk There is a risk that employment requirements are not followed leading to HR issues because the legislative requirements are not known or effective processes/procedures in place.	• Support from the trust HR Manager. • Support from SLA's (HR solicitors). • Embed new HR Assistant roles.
Safeguarding risk There is a risk of safeguarding infringements (including high risk behaviour e.g. from use of knives, guns, drugs) leading to reputational issues, enforcement action or financial penalties because of inadequate safeguarding procedures.	• Safeguarding policy and procedures. • Annual refresher training on policy and procedure. • All staff complete mandatory safeguarding training and it is kept up to date. • Liaison with local police as required. • External online safeguarding training. • Regular safeguarding audit. • Regularly monitor safeguarding controls.
Strategic risk There is a risk that the trust has no long-term strategy in place leading to it losing focus and direction because of poor financial planning, succession planning and vision.	• Maintenance and development of a suitable long-term strategy to give focus and direction to the academy trust. • Constant review of the external environment of the academy trust to ensure the academy trust is at the forefront of changes.

Emerging risks	Mitigation
The trust recognises that the Local Government Pension Scheme is a significant potential liability.	The academy trust is able to meet its known annual deficit contribution commitments for the foreseeable future, the risk from this liability is minimised where possible and is manageable.
Chatsworth Multi-Academy Trust coming into the Sovereign Trust.	A proposal for Chatsworth MAT to join The Sovereign Trust was presented to the North West Group Advisory Board on 28 June 2023. The Regional Director approved the proposal. Chatsworth MAT have now transferred to The Sovereign Trust, after the year end.
New Park academy operates from a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) with a repayment programme until 2030.	By monitoring the financial position of the academy, the board will anticipate issues with meeting the requirements of the PFI.
Unfunded pay awards.	Budget forecasts will be reviewed more frequently to understand the impact and the F&R will have additional meetings to discuss enabling decisive action to be taken timely. Local Authorities will be informed of the financial pressures.
Warrington Free School.	Budget forecasts will be updated. Regular meetings will be held with Warrington LA and the DfE. Alternative sites to be considered to possibly facilitate provision until permanent buildings are available.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Fundraising

The majority of our fundraising is done through lettings of the buildings after school hours and of the hydrotherapy pool at Pictor throughout the week (when available), and at weekends. Other fundraising activities usually include events organised by the parent/staff/friend's groups. The academy trust does not use any external fundraisers.

Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting

UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024	1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024	1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023
	Consumption	Consumption
Energy consumption Aggregate of energy consumption in the year	1,766,220.19 kWh	1,747,681.21 kWh
Total Mileage Staff Claims	30,724.99 kWh	38,462.41 kWh
Total Mileage School Buses	37,155.21 kWh	32,560.81 kWh
Emissions of CO2 equivalent – Given in Metric Tonnes		
Scope 1 direct emissions		
Gas consumption	227.68	228.51
Owned transport – mini-buses	9.50	5.60
TOTAL Scope 1	237.18	234.11
Scope 2 indirect emissions		
TOTAL Scope 2 - Purchased electricity	107.95	103.23
Scope 3 other indirect emissions		
Business travel in employee owned vehicles	7.12	8.98
Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e	352.25	346.32
Intensity ratio tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.63	0.67

Quantification and reporting methodology

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

Intensity measurement

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

The Trust continues to work with staff and pupils to promote being resourceful with energy and is pleased to see a reduction in the intensity ratio. The pupil ratio has improved this year due to increased pupil numbers.

The Trust is working with an energy consultant to establish possible options so that we can continue to improve our energy consumption. Further investigation and research is required to understand the possible benefits of Voltage Optimisation (VO) for our electric consumption. After an audit of our water usage it was determined that overall performance is as expected and no recommendations to implement.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Measures taken to improve energy efficiency

Improvements i(increased pupil numbers). Electric consumption has increased slightly across the trust due to the conversion to electricity from gas. Energy efficiencies are seen at New Park and Manor Academy.

- Longford Park's electric increase could be associated with the reduction in class sizes resulting in more areas of the school being utilised for teaching.
- Pictor energy consumption increase due to increased use of the Hydrotherapy Pool.
- Decrease in gas energy is seen across the trust due to energy efficiencies at New Park and Manor Academy.

Plans for future periods

Longer-term developmental needs include improving our facilities wherever funding will allow. In particular, we shall strive to secure grants to allow:

- the expansion of pupil opportunities; provision to increase to the age of 25.
- improved and increased capacity at New Park Academy, Longford Park and at Manor Academy;
- increased funding from external grant funding applications; and
- future school acquisitions and growth, Free School applications.

The trade, assets and liabilities of Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust, containing Chatsworth High School and Community College and Chatsworth Futures Limited (a specialist FE provider) were transferred to The Sovereign Trust on 1 October 2024.

Our plans for growth focus on special schools.

The Free School in Warrington (Seymour Academy) will be officially open in September 2026. We envisage 'growing our own' staff and creating career paths for promotion and alternative opportunities across the trust schools. There is a new wave of Special Free schools and AP provision recently announced.

Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others

During the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024, The Sovereign Trust did not hold any funds as a custodian trustee on behalf of any other charitable organisation.

Auditor

Insofar 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, was approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 12 December 2024 and signed on the board's behalf by:



E Austin
Chair of trustees

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Scope of responsibility

As trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that The Sovereign Trust has an effective and appropriate system of controls, 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 officer, as accounting officer, for ensuring financial controls conform to the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreements between The Sovereign Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the board of trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance here supplements that described in the trustees' report and in the statement of trustees' responsibilities. The board of trustees has formally met five times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the board of trustees was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Ian McGrath	3	5
Eddie Austin	4	5
Nicholas Gill	4	5
Paul Eckley	5	5
Neil Moseley	4	5
Stephanie Capon	5	5
John Lomas	0	5

Finance, Risk and Audit Committee

The Finance, Risk and Audit committee is a sub-committee of the board of trustees. The Finance, Risk & Audit Committee was formed in order to discuss finance, risk and audit matters. This committee also challenges senior leadership decisions in a knowledgeable way. The purpose and responsibility of the committee is to oversee the financial, risk management and the wider internal control framework of the academy trust and report any findings to the board of trustees. The committee has met four times during the year.

Attendance during the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Nicholas Gill	3	5
Neil Moseley	5	5
Paul Eckley	5	5
Stephanie Capon	4	5

Conflicts of interest

Upon appointment, and at least annually, directors, members, governors and officers are required to complete a declaration of Outside and Business Interest form. This document must also be updated whenever a material change occurs. A register of interests is maintained and made available to the public via the website, in line with the trust's Conflicts of Interest Policy and the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook.

Failure by a director, member, governor or officer to declare an interest, real or perceived, could result in the complaints process being instigated by the trust. Depending on the circumstances and severity of the conflict, this may result in the person being removed from office in accordance with the trust's Articles of Association.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Governance reviews

The Sovereign Trust board of trustees reviews its effectiveness at the end of each meeting and at the end of the year by completing a skills review and a series of surveys sent by the chair of trustees. These focus on various areas:

- Governance framework: Compliance and evaluation
- Governance framework: People and structures
- Governance framework: Strategic leadership
- Governance framework: Accountability for educational standards and financial performance

The chair collates the information to inform discussion about skills development on the board. The resulting actions from the last governance effectiveness review was to further develop the role of the chair and to strengthen the SEN educational knowledge on the Board by seeking an additional trustee. We strengthened the trustees' knowledge and understanding of safeguarding by introducing an online training system. There is a new chair of trustees with extensive knowledge of organisational development and skills in chairing committees. This has had a considerable positive impact on how the meetings are run. Similarly, our chair of the Finance and Risk Committee brings vast experience, knowledge and understanding of company accounts and has streamlined the Finance meetings.

Review of value for money

As accounting officer, the chief executive officer has responsibility for ensuring that the academy trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. The accounting officer understands that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes, as well as estates safety and management, achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The accounting officer considers how the trust's use of 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 or by using a framework where appropriate. The accounting officer for the academy trust has delivered improved value for money as described below:

Improving educational results

Our resources are directed where they will be the most effective in meeting educational requirements, for example;

- robust tracking systems to record and monitor all aspects of pupil data including progress;
- continuing to monitor staffing levels and deploy staff efficiently to support the curriculum and areas of development;
- through robust performance management systems that ensure staff development delivers excellent teaching and learning opportunities for pupils;
- funding is allocated to optimal effect, e.g. through personalised programmes for pupils, after school clubs, breakfast clubs; vocational courses and accreditations, supported internships
- working collaboratively with other schools, forming a Teaching School Alliance to improve CPD and share excellent practice and improve standards;
- implement strategies to improve attendance;
- provide increased speech and language support for pupils;
- increasing age range to 25;
- working with Warrington LA to establish a Free School provision to enable more pupils to be educated in their local area; and
- working with LA's to determine the SEND need to provide AP provision and Special School provision in the new wave of Free schools.

Financial governance and oversight

Financial governance arrangements include regular monitoring by the board of trustees and through the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee including:

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and monthly financial reports reviewed and agreed by the board;
- regular monitoring review of reports and data within the board meetings, monitoring the impact of activities and funding streams such as pupil premium;
- monthly reviews by the executive management team of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

- robust financial procedures and regular policy reviews ensure the academy trust is operating within the regulations of the Academies Financial Handbook; and
- external and internal audit checks, monitoring and reporting on the academy trust's financial procedures and performance.

Better purchasing

- spending proposals are priced and presented to the board, where appropriate, challenged appropriately and recorded in minutes; and
- contracts and service level agreements are reviewed regularly to ensure the service remains suitable for the needs of the academy trust and tenders/quotes are obtained to ensure value for money.

Reviewing controls and managing risks

- cash flow forecasts are included within regular reports to identify surplus cash balances;
- clearly defined purchasing guidelines;
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties are defined within policies and board meetings; and
- a review of risk register is a standing item for all meetings.

The purpose of the system of internal control

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

Capacity to handle risk

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

The risk and control framework

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

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the board of trustees;
- regular reviews by the FRAC 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; and
- identification and management of risks.

The board of trustees has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and the academy trust appointed Warrington Borough Council as internal auditor for the 2023-2024 period.

The internal auditor's role included giving advice on financial and other matters and performing a range of checks on the academy trust's financial and other systems. In particular, the checks carried out in the year included:

- Leadership and governance
- Financial management and control
- Orders and payments
- Petty cash
- People management
- Income and banking
- Asset and security management
- Unofficial funds

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

On a quarterly basis, the internal auditor reports to the board of trustees, through the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the board of trustees' financial responsibilities. On an annual basis the internal auditor prepares a summary report to the committee outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress.

The internal auditor reports to the board of Trustees, through the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the board of trustees' financial responsibilities.

Review of effectiveness

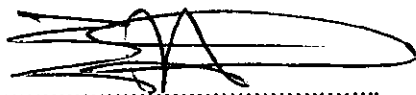
As accounting officer, the chief executive has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. During the year in question the review has been informed by:

- the work of the internal auditor;
- the work of the SRMA;
- the work of the external auditor; and
- the work of the executive managers within the academy trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

Conclusion

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

Approved by order of the members of the board of directors on 12 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



E Austin
Chair of trustees



P Eckley
Accounting officer

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

As accounting officer of The Sovereign Trust, I have considered my responsibility to notify the academy trust board of trustees and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding, including for estates safety and management, under the funding agreement 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's board of trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the academy trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the academy trust's funding 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.


.....
P Eckley
Accounting Officer

Date: 12 December 2024

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

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

The trustees (who are also the directors of The Sovereign Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the accounts in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 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 accounts for each financial year. Under company law, the trustees must not approve the accounts 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 accounts, the trustees are required to:

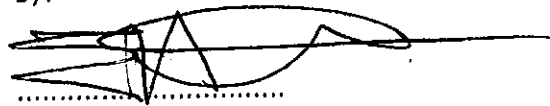
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts 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 accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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

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

Approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on 12 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



E Austin
Chair of Trustees

Date: 12 December 2024

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOVEREIGN TRUST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Opinion

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

In our opinion the accounts:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company'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;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the accounts and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the accounts 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 accounts 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 accounts themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOVEREIGN TRUST (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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

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

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

Use of our report

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

DJH Audit Limited

Candice Beynon FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of DJH Audit Limited

Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor

Bridge House
Ashley Road
Hale
Altrincham
WA14 2UT

Date: 12/12/2024

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOVEREIGN TRUST (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts 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 accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the accounts, the trustees are responsible for assessing the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the accounts 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 accounts.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

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

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

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- We have confirmed that the activities conform to the academy trust's framework of authorities. As identified by review of minutes, management accounts, discussion with the accounting officer and other key management personnel.
- We have carried out an analytical review as part of the consideration of whether general activities of the academy trust are within the academy trust's framework of authorities.
- We have considered the evidence supporting the accounting officer's statement on regularity, propriety and compliance and have evaluated the general control environment of the academy trust and extended the procedures required for financial statements to include regularity.
- We have assessed and tested a sample of the specific control activities over regularity of a particular activity. In performing sample testing of expenditure, we have considered whether the activity is permissible within the academy trust's framework of authorities. We confirm that each item tested has been appropriately authorised in accordance with the academy trust's delegated authorities and that the internal delegations have been approved by the governing body, and conform to the limits set by the Department for Education.
- Formal representations have been obtained from the governing body and the accounting officer acknowledging their responsibilities including disclosing all non-compliance with laws and regulations specific to the authorising framework, access to accounting records, provision of information and explanations, and other matters where direct evidence is not available.
- In performing sample testing of expenditure, we have reviewed against specific terms of grant funding within the funding agreement. We have reviewed the list of suppliers and have considered whether supplies are from related parties and have reviewed minutes for evidence of declaration of interest, and whether or not there was involvement in the decision to order from this supplier.
- We have performed sample testing of other income and tested whether activities are permitted within the academy trust's charitable objects.

Conclusion

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

DJH Audit Limited

DJH Audit Limited
Reporting Accountant

Dated: *12/12/2024*

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY TO THE SOVEREIGN TRUST AND THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 2 October 2023 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 Sovereign Trust during the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

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

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of The Sovereign Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 16 December 2015 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 period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

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

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

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

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

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

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

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds: General £'000	Fixed asset £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and capital grants	3	-	17	107	124	180
Charitable activities:						
- Funding for educational operations	4	-	15,208	-	15,208	13,066
Other trading activities	5	296	12	-	308	323
Investments	6	38	-	-	38	11
Total		<u>334</u>	<u>15,237</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>15,678</u>	<u>13,580</u>
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities:						
- Educational operations	9	250	14,890	768	15,908	13,883
Total	7	<u>250</u>	<u>14,890</u>	<u>768</u>	<u>15,908</u>	<u>13,883</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		84	347	(661)	(230)	(303)
Transfers between funds	18	(469)	247	222	-	-
Other recognised gains/(losses)						
Actuarial losses on defined benefit pension schemes	20	-	(320)	-	(320)	(55)
Net movement in funds		<u>(385)</u>	<u>274</u>	<u>(439)</u>	<u>(550)</u>	<u>(358)</u>
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		<u>1,152</u>	<u>1,107</u>	<u>24,853</u>	<u>27,112</u>	<u>27,470</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u>767</u>	<u>1,381</u>	<u>24,414</u>	<u>26,562</u>	<u>27,112</u>

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Comparative year information		Unrestricted	Restricted funds:		Total
Year ended 31 August 2023		funds	General	Fixed asset	2023
	Notes	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and capital grants	3	-	31	149	180
Charitable activities:					
- Funding for educational operations	4	-	13,066	-	13,066
Other trading activities	5	313	10	-	323
Investments	6	11	-	-	11
Total		<u>324</u>	<u>13,107</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>13,580</u>
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities:					
- Educational operations	9	158	12,972	753	13,883
Total	7	<u>158</u>	<u>12,972</u>	<u>753</u>	<u>13,883</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		166	135	(604)	(303)
Transfers between funds	18	(34)	(87)	121	-
Other recognised gains/(losses)					
Actuarial losses on defined benefit pension schemes	20	-	(55)	-	(55)
Net movement in funds		132	(7)	(483)	(358)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		<u>1,020</u>	<u>1,114</u>	<u>25,336</u>	<u>27,470</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u>1,152</u>	<u>1,107</u>	<u>24,853</u>	<u>27,112</u>

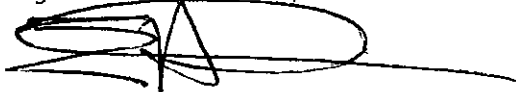
THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024

		2024		2023	
	Notes	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	13		24,410		24,844
Current assets					
Debtors	14	398		508	
Cash at bank and in hand		2,969		2,647	
		3,367		3,155	
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	(1,189)		(855)	
Net current assets			2,178		2,300
Total assets less current liabilities			26,588		27,144
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	16		(26)		(32)
Net assets excluding pension asset			26,562		27,112
Defined benefit pension scheme asset	20		-		-
Total net assets			26,562		27,112
Funds of the academy trust:					
Restricted funds	18				
- Fixed asset funds			24,414		24,853
- Restricted income funds			1,381		1,107
Total restricted funds			25,795		25,960
Unrestricted income funds	18		767		1,152
Total funds			26,562		27,112

The accounts were approved by the trustees and authorised for issue on 12 December 2024 and are signed on their behalf by:



E Austin
Chair of Trustees

Company registration number 09666511 (England and Wales)

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

		2024		2023	
	Notes	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cash flows from operating activities					
Net cash provided by operating activities	21		517		309
Cash flows from investing activities					
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		38		11	
Capital grants from DfE Group		88		128	
Capital funding received from sponsors and others		19		21	
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(334)		(350)	
Net cash used in investing activities			(189)		(190)
Cash flows from financing activities					
Repayment of long term bank loan		(6)		(7)	
Net cash used in financing activities			(6)		(7)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period			322		112
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year			2,647		2,535
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year			2,969		2,647

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1 Accounting policies

The Sovereign Trust is a charitable company. The address of its principal place of business is given on page 1 and the nature of its operations are set out in the trustees' report.

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

1.1 Basis of preparation

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

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

1.2 Going concern

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

1.3 Income

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

Grants

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

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

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

Sponsorship income

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

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1 Accounting policies

(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 period it is receivable and to the extent the academy trust has provided the goods or services.

Donated goods, facilities and services

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

Donated fixed assets

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

Transfer of assets on conversion

Where assets and liabilities are received by the academy trust on conversion to an academy, the transferred net assets are measured at fair value and recognised in the balance sheet at the point when the risks and rewards of ownership pass to the academy trust. Income equal to the net assets transferred on conversion is recognised within donations and capital grant income.

1.4 Expenditure

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

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Expenditure on raising funds

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

Charitable activities

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

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

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

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

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

Leasehold land and buildings	Land - 0.8% straight line, Buildings - 2% straight line
Computer equipment	33 1/3% straight line
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	20% reducing balance
Motor vehicles	25% 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.

1.6 Liabilities

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

1.7 Leased assets

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

1.8 Financial instruments

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

Financial assets

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

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

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Financial liabilities

Trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition.

Government loans are recognised at their nominal value and reduced by subsequent repayments.

Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument.

1.9 Taxation

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

1.10 Pensions benefits

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

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

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

1.11 Fund accounting

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

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

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

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.

1.12 PFI arrangements

The academy trust has a PFI arrangement in place in New Park Academy which covers rent, rates, maintenance and facility management arrangements. Payments are accounted for in the period to which they relate.

1.13 Agency arrangements

The academy trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 bursary funds from the ESFA. Payments received from the ESFA and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the statement of financial activities as the trust does not have control over the charitable application of the funds. The funds received and paid and any balances held are disclosed in note 27.

2 Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

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

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost or income for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 20, will impact on 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 judgement

The trustees have considered the apportionment of depreciation between direct and support costs. The majority of fixed assets are almost entirely used for the provision of education and only a small part for support services. Therefore a 90% direct cost and 10% support cost apportionment is considered appropriate.

3 Donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Capital grants	-	88	88	128
Other donations	-	36	36	52
	-	124	124	180

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

4 Funding for the academy trust's educational operations

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
DfE/ESFA grants				
General annual grant (GAG)	-	4,590	4,590	4,500
Other DfE/ESFA grants:				
- UIFSM	-	18	18	12
- Pupil premium	-	312	312	299
- 16-19 Funding Allocation	-	410	410	400
- Others	-	294	294	274
	-	5,624	5,624	5,485
Other government grants				
Local authority grants	-	9,584	9,584	7,581
Total funding	-	15,208	15,208	13,066

The academy trust received £9,584,000 (2023: £7,581,000) from the local authorities in the year for High Needs Top Up funding, teachers pay and pension grants, alternative provision PRU funding, Out Of Borough funding, unitary charge funding, pupil premium funding and other funding.

There were no unfulfilled conditions or other contingencies relating to the grants in the year.

5 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Hire of facilities	90	-	90	89
Catering income	41	-	41	25
Other income	165	12	177	209
	296	12	308	323

6 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Short term deposits	38	-	38	11

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

7 Expenditure

	Staff costs £'000	Non-pay expenditure Premises £'000	Other £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Academies' educational operations					
- Direct costs	10,256	684	1,921	12,861	10,837
- Allocated support costs	1,082	1,294	671	3,047	3,046
	<u>11,338</u>	<u>1,978</u>	<u>2,592</u>	<u>15,908</u>	<u>13,883</u>

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Operating lease rentals	442	437
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	768	753
Fees payable to auditor for:		
- Audit	14	13
- Other services	3	3
Net interest on defined benefit pension liability	(115)	(4)
	<u></u>	<u></u>

8 Central services

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

- human resources;
- financial services;
- legal services;
- educational support services

The academy trust charges for these services on the basis of 6% of GAG, LA Top-Up and Out Of Borough income.

The amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Manor Academy	238	224
Pictor Academy	183	176
New Park Academy	284	194
Longford Park School	102	92
	<u>807</u>	<u>686</u>

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

9 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Direct costs				
Educational operations	9	12,852	12,861	10,837
Support costs				
Educational operations	241	2,806	3,047	3,046
	<u>250</u>	<u>15,658</u>	<u>15,908</u>	<u>13,883</u>
Analysis of costs			2024	2023
			£'000	£'000
Direct costs				
Teaching and educational support staff costs			10,256	8,952
Staff development			15	17
Depreciation			684	678
Technology costs			33	53
Educational supplies and services			1,698	958
Examination fees			30	23
Other direct costs			145	156
			<u>12,861</u>	<u>10,837</u>
Support costs				
Support staff costs			1,163	1,357
Depreciation			84	75
Technology costs			167	187
Maintenance of premises and equipment			647	605
Cleaning			158	146
Energy costs			259	187
Rent, rates and other occupancy costs			110	108
Insurance			21	21
Security and transport			15	4
Catering			305	223
Interest on defined benefit pension scheme			(115)	(4)
Legal costs			176	97
Other support costs			36	24
Governance costs			21	16
			<u>3,047</u>	<u>3,046</u>

Premises costs includes PFI charges totalling £409,000 (2023: £409,000). These amounts are paid to the local authority, are index linked and the academy trust is committed to these payments until 2030.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

10 Staff

Staff costs and employee benefits

Staff costs during the year were:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Wages and salaries	8,127	7,369
Social security costs	834	745
Pension costs	1,592	1,680
Staff costs - employees	10,553	9,794
Agency staff costs	745	402
Staff restructuring costs	40	16
	11,338	10,212
Staff development and other staff costs	96	114
Total staff expenditure	11,434	10,326
Staff restructuring costs comprise:		
Severance payments	40	16

Severance payments

The academy trust paid 2 severance payments in the year, disclosed in the following bands:

£0 - £25,000	1
£25,001 - £50,000	1

Special staff severance payments

Special staff severance payments are amounts paid to employees outside of statutory and contractual requirements. Included in staff restructuring costs are non-contractual special staff severance payments totalling £11,500 (2023: £3,700). Individually the payments were £7,000 & £4,500 (2023: 1 payment of £3,700).

Staff numbers

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

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Teachers	90	86
Administration and support	185	150
Management	8	6
	283	242

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

10 Staff

(Continued)

The number of persons employed, expressed as a full time equivalent, was as follows:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Teachers	76	80
Administration and support	133	129
Management	8	6
	<u>217</u>	<u>215</u>

Higher paid staff

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

	2024 Number	2023 Number
£60,001 - £70,000	5	7
£70,001 - £80,000	3	1
£90,001 - £100,000	-	3
£100,001 - £110,000	2	1
£110,001 - £120,000	1	-
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the academy trust comprise the trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of key management personnel benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the academy trust was £968,000 (2023: £837,000).

11 Trustees' remuneration and expenses

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

The value of trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

P Eckley (Accounting Officer and trustee - appointed 1 September 2022)
Remuneration: £115,001 - £120,000 (2023: £105,001 - £110,000)
Employer's pension contributions: £30,001 - £35,000 (2023: £20,001 - £25,000)

During the period ended 31 August 2024, travel and subsistence expenses totalling £96 (2023: £nil) were reimbursed to 1 trustee.

Other transactions with the trustees are set out in the related parties note.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

12 Trustees' and officers' insurance

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

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold land and buildings £'000	Computer equipment £'000	Fixtures, fittings & equipment £'000	Motor vehicles £'000	Total £'000
Cost					
At 1 September 2023	26,160	468	2,798	178	29,604
Additions	-	103	231	-	334
At 31 August 2024	26,160	571	3,029	178	29,938
Depreciation					
At 1 September 2023	2,819	350	1,467	124	4,760
Charge for the year	413	73	266	16	768
At 31 August 2024	3,232	423	1,733	140	5,528
Net book value					
At 31 August 2024	22,928	148	1,296	38	24,410
At 31 August 2023	23,341	118	1,331	54	24,844

The net book value of land and buildings comprises:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Long leaseholds (over 50 years)	22,928	23,341

The land and buildings for New Park Academy are provided on a PFI contract which at 31 August 2024 had a further 6 years to run. The land and buildings are owned by Salford City Council.

The land and buildings for Manor Academy, Pictor Academy and Longford Park School are held on a long leasehold of 125 years from the date of conversion.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

14 Debtors

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Trade debtors	98	105
VAT recoverable	40	114
Prepayments and accrued income	260	289
	<u>398</u>	<u>508</u>

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Government loans	7	7
Trade creditors	178	161
Other taxation and social security	160	173
ESFA creditors	36	98
Other creditors	218	106
Accruals and deferred income	590	310
	<u>1,189</u>	<u>855</u>

16 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Government loans	26	32
	<u>26</u>	<u>32</u>

Analysis of loans

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Wholly repayable within five years	33	39
Less: included in current liabilities	(7)	(7)
	<u>26</u>	<u>32</u>

Loan maturity

Debt due in one year or less	7	7
Due in more than one year but not more than two years	7	7
Due in more than two years but not more than five years	14	17
Due in more than five years	5	8
	<u>33</u>	<u>39</u>

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

16 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

(Continued)

At the balance sheet date, the academy trust had the following loans:

Manor Academy - £4,827 outstanding Salix loan relating to previous capital projects.
Manor Academy - £23,085 outstanding CIF loan relating to electrical works completed in 2020-21.
Pictor Academy - £4,222 outstanding Salix loan relating to previous boiler works.

Salix loans are interest free loans approved by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) repayable in equal instalments over 8 years.

The CIF loan was also approved by the ESFA as part of the CIF bid and has an interest rate of 2.29% and is repayable over 10 years.

17 Deferred income

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Deferred income is included within:		
Creditors due within one year	113	9
	<u>113</u>	<u>9</u>
Deferred income at 1 September 2023	9	11
Released from previous years	(9)	(11)
Resources deferred in the year	113	9
	<u>113</u>	<u>9</u>
Deferred income at 31 August 2024	113	9

At the balance sheet date, the academy trust was holding the following funds in advance of the next financial year:

- Universal Infant Free School Meals - £11,000 (2023: £8,000)
- LA grant income - £99,000 (2023: £nil)
- Other income - £3,000 (2023: £1,000)

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

18 Funds

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2024 £'000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,107	4,590	(4,563)	247	1,381
UIFSM	-	18	(18)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	312	(312)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	704	(704)	-	-
Other government grants	-	9,584	(9,584)	-	-
Other restricted funds	-	29	(29)	-	-
Pension reserve	-	-	320	(320)	-
	<u>1,107</u>	<u>15,237</u>	<u>(14,890)</u>	<u>(73)</u>	<u>1,381</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Inherited on conversion	21,540	-	(408)	-	21,132
DfE group capital grants	2,277	88	(249)	-	2,116
Capital expenditure from GAG	712	-	(79)	222	855
Local authority capital grants	252	-	-	-	252
Other capital grants	72	19	(32)	-	59
	<u>24,853</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>(768)</u>	<u>222</u>	<u>24,414</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>25,960</u>	<u>15,344</u>	<u>(15,658)</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>25,795</u>
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	<u>1,152</u>	<u>334</u>	<u>(250)</u>	<u>(469)</u>	<u>767</u>
Total funds	<u>27,112</u>	<u>15,678</u>	<u>(15,908)</u>	<u>(320)</u>	<u>26,562</u>

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

18 Funds

(Continued)

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

Restricted general funds are those resources that have been designated restricted by the grant provider in meeting the objects of the academy and are restricted to both the day to day running of the academy and capital expenditure.

Restricted fixed asset funds are those funds relating to the long term assets of the academy used in delivering the objects of the academy. The restricted fixed asset fund carried forward represents the net book value of fixed assets carried forward of £24,410,000 plus unspent capital funding of £4,000. The transfer of £222,000 from restricted general GAG fund to restricted fixed asset fund relates to capital additions for which there was no specific capital funding.

Unrestricted funds are funds which the board of trustees may use in the pursuance of the academy's objects and are expendable at the discretion of the trustees.

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

The pension values as at 31 August 2024 have been determined by the actuary which is showing the following pension assets within the academy trust as at the balance sheet date:

Manor Academy & Pictor Academy – pension asset of £2,052,000
New Park Academy – pension asset of £670,000
Longford Park School – pension asset of £138,000

In accordance with applicable accounting standards, the asset values have been capped at an asset ceiling value of £nil on the basis that the asset is not deemed to be realisable.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

18 Funds

(Continued)

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

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2023 £'000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	928	4,500	(4,234)	(87)	1,107
UIFSM	-	12	(12)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	299	(299)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	674	(674)	-	-
Other government grants	-	7,581	(7,581)	-	-
Other restricted funds	-	41	(41)	-	-
Pension reserve	186	-	(131)	(55)	-
	<u>1,114</u>	<u>13,107</u>	<u>(12,972)</u>	<u>(142)</u>	<u>1,107</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Inherited on conversion	21,957	-	(417)	-	21,540
DfE group capital grants	2,348	128	(199)	-	2,277
Capital expenditure from GAG	694	-	(103)	121	712
Local authority capital grants	277	-	(25)	-	252
Other capital grants	60	21	(9)	-	72
	<u>25,336</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>(753)</u>	<u>121</u>	<u>24,853</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>26,450</u>	<u>13,256</u>	<u>(13,725)</u>	<u>(21)</u>	<u>25,960</u>
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	<u>1,020</u>	<u>324</u>	<u>(158)</u>	<u>(34)</u>	<u>1,152</u>
Total funds	<u>27,470</u>	<u>13,580</u>	<u>(13,883)</u>	<u>(55)</u>	<u>27,112</u>

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

18 Funds

(Continued)

Total funds analysis by academy

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were allocated as follows:		
Manor Academy	921	729
Pictor Academy	167	344
New Park Academy	751	699
Longford Park School	74	314
Central services	235	173
Total before fixed assets fund and pension reserve	2,148	2,259
Restricted fixed asset fund	24,414	24,853
Pension reserve	-	-
Total funds	26,562	27,112

Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching and educational support staff £'000	Other support staff costs £'000	Educational supplies £'000	Other costs excl depn & FRS102 adj £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Manor Academy	2,945	298	223	416	3,882	3,629
Pictor Academy	2,606	333	58	409	3,406	3,038
New Park Academy	2,597	378	1,571	638	5,184	4,004
Longford Park School	1,712	207	43	222	2,184	1,751
Central services	436	129	8	231	804	577
	10,296	1,345	1,903	1,916	15,460	12,999

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

19 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	General £'000	Restricted funds: Fixed asset £'000	Total Funds £'000
Fund balances at 31 August 2024 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	24,410	24,410
Current assets	767	2,596	4	3,367
Current liabilities	-	(1,189)	-	(1,189)
Non-current liabilities	-	(26)	-	(26)
Total net assets	767	1,381	24,414	26,562
Fund balances at 31 August 2023 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	24,844	24,844
Current assets	1,152	1,994	9	3,155
Current liabilities	-	(855)	-	(855)
Non-current liabilities	-	(32)	-	(32)
Total net assets	1,152	1,107	24,853	27,112

20 Pension and similar obligations

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

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

Contributions amounting to £218,000 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2024 (2023: £104,000) and are included within creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

Introduction

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

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

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

20 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

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

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

The employer's pension costs paid to the TPS in the period amounted to £1,021,000 (2023: £879,000).

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

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

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contributions are as noted below. The agreed contribution rates for future years are 20.6% for employers and 5.5 to 12.5% for employees.

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

Total contributions made	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Employer's contributions	766	667
Employees' contributions	221	192
Total contributions	987	859

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

20 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

Principal actuarial assumptions	2024 %	2023 %
Rate of Increase in salaries	3.45	3.75
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.65	2.95
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	20.0 - 20.7	20.1 - 20.8
- Females	22.9 - 24.7	22.9 - 24.8
Retiring in 20 years		
- Males	20.0 - 20.5	20.1 - 20.6
- Females	24.3 - 25.1	24.4 - 25.2

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

20 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

Sensitivity analysis

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

Manor Academy & Pictor Academy

	Approximate % increase to liabilities	Approximate monetary amount (£'000)
0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate	2%	155
1 year increase in member life expectancy	4%	257
0.1% increase in the Salary Increase Rate	0%	7
0.1% increase in the Pension Increase Rate (CPI)	2%	151

New Park Academy

	Approximate % increase to liabilities	Approximate monetary amount (£'000)
0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate	3%	63
1 year increase in member life expectancy	4%	96
0.1% increase in the Salary Increase Rate	0%	2
0.1% increase in the Pension Increase Rate (CPI)	3%	62

Longford Park School

	Approximate % increase to liabilities	Approximate monetary amount (£'000)
0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate	3%	27
1 year increase in member life expectancy	4%	38
0.1% increase in the Salary Increase Rate	0%	-
0.1% increase in the Pension Increase Rate (CPI)	3%	27

The academy trust's share of the assets in the scheme

	2024 Fair value £'000	2023 Fair value £'000
Equities	8,732	7,515
Bonds	1,898	1,502
Cash and other liquid assets	1,012	859
Property	1,012	859
Total market value of assets	12,654	10,735

The actual return on scheme assets was £1,046,000 (2023: £473,000).

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

20 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

Amount recognised in the statement of financial activities	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Current service cost	561	802
Interest income	(581)	(419)
Interest cost	466	415
Total amount recognised	446	798
Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
At 1 September 2023	10,735	9,324
Current service cost	561	802
Interest cost	466	415
Employee contributions	221	192
Actuarial loss	785	109
Benefits paid	(114)	(107)
At 31 August 2024	12,654	10,735
Changes in the fair value of the academy trust's share of scheme assets	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
At 1 September 2023	10,735	9,510
Interest income	581	419
Actuarial gain	465	54
Employer contributions	766	667
Employee contributions	221	192
Benefits paid	(114)	(107)
At 31 August 2024	12,654	10,735

The pension values as at 31 August 2024 have been determined by the actuary which is showing the following pension assets within the academy trust as at the balance sheet date:

Manor Academy & Pictor Academy – pension asset of £2,052,000
New Park Academy – pension asset of £670,000
Longford Park School – pension asset of £138,000

In accordance with applicable accounting standards, the asset values have been capped at an asset ceiling value of £nil on the basis that the asset is not deemed to be realisable.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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

	Notes	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Net expenditure for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)		(230)	(303)
Adjusted for:			
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income		(107)	(149)
Investment income receivable	6	(38)	(11)
Defined benefit pension costs less contributions payable	20	(205)	135
Defined benefit pension scheme finance income	20	(115)	(4)
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets		768	753
Decrease in debtors		110	123
Increase/(decrease) in creditors		334	(235)
Net cash provided by operating activities		517	309

22 Analysis of changes in net funds

	1 September 2023 £'000	Cash flows £'000	31 August 2024 £'000
Cash	2,647	322	2,969
Loans falling due within one year	(7)	-	(7)
Loans falling due after more than one year	(32)	6	(26)
	2,608	328	2,936

23 Long-term commitments, including operating leases

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

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Amounts due within one year	36	30
Amounts due in two and five years	34	44
	70	74

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

23 Long-term commitments, including operating leases

(Continued)

At 31 August 2024 the total of the academy trust's future minimum lease payments under other contractual commitments was:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Amounts due within one year	409	409
Amounts due in two and five years	1,636	1,634
Amounts due after five years	170	613
	<u>2,215</u>	<u>2,656</u>

PFI Commitments

New Park Academy is a PFI school operating under a PFI contract due to expire in 2030. Upon the conversion to an academy on 1 June 2018, the Trust contracted with Salford City Council to discharge the financial obligations of unitary charges for the remainder of the contract. The unitary charge amounted to £409,000 in 2023/24 and is expected to be £409,000 in 2024/25. The unitary charge commitment for the remaining 6 years of the PFI contract is included in the operating lease commitments shown above.

24 Related party transactions

Owing to the nature of the academy trust and the composition of the board of trustees being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, transactions may take place with organisations in which the trustees have an interest. The following related party transactions took place in the financial period.

During the year ended 31 August 2024, the academy trust procured maintenance services from CS Services totalling £3,680 (2023: £4,422). CS Services is owned by the brother of L Hughes, CFO of The Sovereign Trust. At the balance sheet date, no amounts were owed by the academy trust.

In entering into the transaction, the academy trust has complied with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023.

25 Post balance sheet events

On 1 October 2024, the trade, assets and liabilities of Chatsworth High School and Community College and of Chatsworth Futures Limited were transferred from Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust into The Sovereign Trust for nil consideration.

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 or she is a member, or within one year after he or she ceases to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10 for the debts and liabilities contracted before he or she ceases to be a member.

THE SOVEREIGN TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

27 Agency arrangements

The academy trust distributes 16-19 bursary funds to students as an agent for the ESFA. In the accounting period ending 31 August 2024 the academy trust received £7,145 and disbursed £8,641 from the fund. As at 31 August 2024, the cumulative unspent 16-19 bursary fund is £305, of which £nil relates to undistributed funding that is repayable to ESFA. Comparatives for the accounting period ending 31 August 2023 are £4,276 received, £6,456 disbursed, total cumulative unspent fund of £1,801 of which £nil was repayable to ESFA.

