

Company Registration Number: 10631500 (England & Wales)

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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OUR CHILDREN 1ST
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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members

Mr C Walton
Mrs R Jessop
Mr R Painter

Trustees

Ms J Davies, Chair (From 2 January 2023)²
Mr S Williams, Chair (Until 1 January 2023) (resigned 1 January 2023)^{1,2}
Mrs H Adams, Head Teacher and Accounting Officer
Mr S Bennett²
Mrs H Bone¹
Mrs L Chalk^{1,2}
Mrs J Thackstone^{1,2}

¹ Finance, Audit, Risk and Resources Committee

² Curriculum Standards and Welfare Committee

Company registered number

10631500

Company name

Our Children 1st

Principal and registered office

Pallister Park Primary School
Gribdale Road
Middlesbrough
TS3 8PW

Senior leadership team

Mrs H Adams, Head Teacher
Mrs H Newbold, Assistant Head
Mr Y Ahmed, Assistant Head
Mr A Oliver, Assistant Head
Mrs N Russell, Chief Finance Officer
Mr M Waterfield, Senior Teacher

Independent auditors

Clive Owen LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
140 Coniscliffe Road
Darlington
County Durham
DL3 7RT

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Bankers

Lloyds Bank plc
83/85 Linthorpe Road
Middlesbrough
TS1 5BU

Solicitors

Muckle LLP
32 Gallowgate
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 4BT

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditor's report of the charitable company for the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023. The annual report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report, and a Directors' report under company law.

The academy trust operates an academy for pupils aged 2 to 11 serving a catchment area in Middlesbrough. It has a pupil capacity of 525 and had 627 number on roll in the school census Spring 2023.

Children are admitted into the academy trust following the Admission Policy in line with Middlesbrough Local Authority.

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 Our Children 1st MAT are also the Directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company operates as Our Children 1st MAT.

Details of the Trustees who served during the year, and to the date these accounts are approved are included in the Reference and administrative details on page 1.

Members' Liability

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

Trustees Indemnities

The academy trust has purchased insurance to protect Trustees from claims arising against negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy trust business. Further details are provided in note 11

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

The members appoint a minimum of 3 Trustees. The term of office for any Trustee shall be 4 years, save that this time limit shall not apply to the Principal or any post help ex-officio. Subject to remaining eligible to be a particular type of Trustee, any Trustee may be re-appointed or re-elected.

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

The training and induction provided for new Trustees depends on their existing experience. Where necessary induction and training is provided on charity, educational, legal and financial matters. All new Trustees are given a tour of the academy / academies and the chance to meet with staff and students. All Trustees are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role as Trustees. As there are normally only one or two new Trustees a year, induction tends to be done informally and is tailored specifically to the individual.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Structure, Governance and Management (continued)

Organisational structure

During the year the academy trust continued to operate a unified management structure. The structure consists of these levels: The Members, the Trustees, the Strategic Leadership Team, the Senior Management Team supported by the Teaching Team. The aim of the management structure is to devolve responsibility and encourage involvement in decision making at all levels.

The Members will oversee key objectives of the academy trusts performance including accounts and annual reports to Trustees. They will be responsible to appoint Trustees and comply with the articles of association.

The Trustees will set aims and objectives in accordance with charitable objects set out in the articles, ensuring articles are fit for purpose, monitor and evaluate performance against aims and objects, create a vision for the MAT, proper stewardship of funds and ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of use in accordance with the law and the Academies Financial Handbook.

The Strategic Leadership Team drives the vision of the trust within the school and is centred on teaching and learning and providing an excellent learning environment for its pupils. They are supported by Senior management and Teaching team.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The academy trust Board of Trustees aim to follow the nationally and locally agreed pay settlements. The Head Teacher is appraised by a panel consisting of Trustees supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external consultant who has been appointed by the Board of Trustees solely for that purpose. The task of appraising the Head Teacher, including the setting of objectives will be delegated to a sub group consisting of normally 3 Trustees. The external consultant is not responsible for returning a recommendation to the Academy Trust Board on whether an increment should be awarded to the Head Teacher following the review, this is a matter for the Trustees alone, however they should take account of any advice offered. The rest of the Senior Leadership Team and the TLRs are appraised by the Head Teacher with pay recommendations made to the Academy Trust Board.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Structure, Governance and Management (continued)

Trade union facility time

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the year	1
Full-time equivalent employee number	1

Percentage of time spent on facility time

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

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time £000

Total cost of facility time	-
Total pay bill	2,995
Percentage of total pay bill spent on facility time	- %

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours	- %
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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Objectives and activities

Objects and aims

The principal object and activity of the charitable company is the operation of Our Children 1st MAT to provide education for students of different abilities between the ages of 2 and 11 years.

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

The main objectives of the academy trust during the year ended 31 August 2023 are as summarised below:

- To increase the % of children achieving expected standard in writing at Key Stage 2
- To increase whole school attendance
- To reduce persistent absence

Our Children 1st MAT believe in maximising opportunities for all our children in order to provide;

- outstanding teaching every day
- a vast range of experiences, academic, social and extra-curricular
- support for the children's emotional and general well-being
- a sense of belonging within the MAT, which ensures that everyone reaches their full potential

It is our belief that every teacher has individual strengths and attributes and that these can be shared through collaboration and common purpose to contribute towards our goal of making a difference for every child within Our Children 1st Multi Academy Trust.

Our Children 1st MAT believe that every child should have the same opportunities and life chances, irrespective of their socio-economic background, gender or ethnicity. We strive to ensure that success is inevitable, by providing outstanding learning opportunities for pupils and staff to develop their knowledge and skills. It is recognised that high expectations and aspirations are integral in achieving success and that the philosophy of 'work hard, play hard' brings assured rewards.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Objectives and activities (continued)

Objectives, strategies and activities

- To increase the % of children achieving the expected standard in writing at Key Stage 2
Children have been taught in smaller groups to support their writing and enable discussion on how to improve work. Staff have moderated writing within school and with other schools in order to ensure consistency across assessments.
- To increase the % of children passing phonics in Year 1
The academy trust invested in professional development of staff to deliver high quality teaching and support in Phonics. The team worked with a consistent program to ensure that every child is supported to be engaged in learning regardless of any barriers or difficulties they may face. Staff were supported by the leadership team and external experts to ensure teaching was consistent across all groups.
- To increase whole school attendance.
The academy trust worked with their EWO to identify families and provide support to enable their child to attend school. Close analysis of data and regular updates were provided in order to target pupils.
- To reduce persistent absence.
The academy trust worked with their EWO to target families requiring support. A range of support was provided on an individualised basis to ensure the needs of the child were met. This aspect will continue to be an area of improvement in the next academic year.

The activities undertaken to achieve these objectives are all intended to provide the highest quality of education in the public sector for students between 2 and 11 years of age.

Public benefit

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

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Objectives and activities (continued)

Strategic report

Achievements and Performance

The main objectives of the academy trust during the year ended 31 August 2023:

- To increase the % of children achieving expected standard in writing at Key Stage 2
This has been achieved and an increase of 16%
- To increase whole school attendance
This has been achieved with an increase of 1%
- To reduce persistent absence
This has been achieved with a decrease of 5%

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Objectives and activities (continued)

Key Stage 2		Reading	Writing	Maths
average progress scores in reading, writing and maths	2023	1.3	-0.4	2.4
	2022	0.7	-1.3	3.1
	2019	-0.4	0.9	2.4
average 'scaled scores' in reading and maths	2023	103	N/A	104
	2022	102	N/A	103
	2019	102	N/A	106

Key Stage 2		Reading	Writing	Maths	RWM Comb
percentage of pupils who achieved the expected standard or above in reading, writing and maths	2023	70%	66%	73%	54%
	2022	66%	50%	78%	50%
	2019	68%	78%	88%	65%
percentage of pupils who achieved a high level of attainment in reading, writing and maths	2023	19%	5%	19%	4%
	2022	20%	3%	15%	1%
	2019	15%	13%	30%	8%

Key Stage 1		Reading	Writing	Maths	Science
percentage of pupils who achieved the expected standard	2023	65%	66%	70%	86%
	2022	65%	60%	69%	76%
	2019	57%	56%	68%	68%
percentage of pupils who achieved greater depth	2023	5%	2%	5%	n/a
	2022	3%	3%	0%	
	2019	5%	4%	4%	

Phonics Screening Check		Y1
percentage of pupils who achieved the expected standard (32/40)	2023	86%
	2022	81%
	2019	68%

Early Years Foundation Stage		Good Level of Development (GLD)
percentage of pupils who achieved the good level of development (GLD)	2023	64%
	2022	59%
	2019	48%

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Objectives and activities (continued)

Strategic Report

Key Performance Indicators

As at 31st August 2023

	2023	2022
Total Income per pupil (£)	6,933	5,664
Total GAG income per pupil (£)	4,774	5,062
Staff costs per pupil (£)	4,960	4,142
Total costs per pupil (£)	6,837	5,757
Staff costs as a % of total costs	73%	72%
Staff costs as a % of total income	72%	73%

Pupil Numbers

658 (including 112 nursery children FTE of 52 for calculation purposes 598 FTE is used)

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.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

(continued)

Financial Review

Most of the academy trust's income is obtained from the Department for Education (DfE) via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in the form of recurrent grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received from the DfE/ESFA during the year ended 31 August 2023 and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The academy trust also received grants for fixed assets from the DfE/ESFA. In accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended practice, 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' (SORP 2015), such grants are shown under the Statement of Financial Activities as restricted income in the fixed asset fund. The restricted fixed asset fund balance is reduced by annual depreciation charges over the expected useful life of the assets concerned.

In addition, the Academy receives additional income, largely related to deprivation factors.

During the year ended 31 August 2023, total expenditure of £4,451,000 was in excess of recurrent grant funding from DfE/ESFA together with other incoming resources. The excess of income over expenditure for the year (excluding pension reserve movements, transfers and restricted fixed asset funds) was £60,000.

All of the expenditure shown in the Statement of Financial Activities is in furtherance of the academy trust's objectives.

At 31 August 2023 net book value of fixed assets was £4,927,000 and movements in tangible fixed assets are shown in note 11 to the Financial Statements. The assets were used exclusively for providing education and the associated support services to the students of the academy trust.

The provisions of Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 have been applied in full in respect of LGPS pension scheme, resulting in no surplus or deficit being recognised on the Balance Sheet.

The academy trust held fund balances as at 31 August 2023 of £5,573,000 comprising £510,000 of restricted general funds, £4,973,000 of restricted fixed asset funds, and £90,000 of unrestricted funds.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Reserves Policy

Funds are held to cover ongoing costs in relation to the running of the academy including catering provisions, energy cost, school trips and uniform costs for example.

The Trustees regularly review the level of reserves. On an annual basis Trustees review the minimum level of reserves for the ongoing needs of an academy. This review encompasses the income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the purposes of reserves.

Trustees therefore consider it prudent to hold reserves in the general fund in the form of restricted general funds (excluding pension reserves) and unrestricted funds of £500,000. This is considered sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipt of grants and provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies i.e. Responsive maintenance, Payroll costs, Energy

As at 31 August 2023 the academy trust holds available reserves of £600,000 comprising of restricted general funds (excluding pension reserves) of £510,000 and unrestricted funds of £90,000. Overall available reserves are considered to be above the level of reserves required for the ongoing needs of the academy. Trustees continue to consider additional activities relating to the academy's objectives to which excess reserves may be applied, including:

- a) Further capital improvements to the premises and teaching facilities;
- b) Further capital investment in ICT to ensure to ensure that the academy remains up to date with technological advancements;
- c) Protection against the sharp increase in inflation;
- d) Protection against the consequence of the decrease of the 2022 and 23 pupil numbers intake because of fall in birth rate;
- e) Protection against the uncertainty over future pension contribution rates;
- f) Protection against the current rise and uncertainty of energy cost forecast

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The principal risks and uncertainties are centered on changes in the level of funding from DfE/ESFA. In addition, the academy trust is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which results in the recognition of a significant deficit on the academy trust Balance Sheet.

The Trustees have assessed the major risks, to which the academy trust is exposed, in particular those relating specifically to teaching provision of facilities and other operational areas of the academy trust, and its finances. The Trustees have implemented a number of systems to assess risks that the school faces, especially in the operational areas (e.g. in relation to teaching, health and safety and school visits) and in relation to the control of finance. Where significant financial risk still remains, they have ensured they have adequate insurance cover. The academy trust has an effective system of internal financial controls and this is explained in more detail in the Governance Statement.

The academy trust has fully implemented the requirements of the Safe Recruitment procedures and all staff have received training in this area in addition to training on Child Protection and PREVENT.

The academy trust is subject to a number of risks and uncertainties in common with other academies. The academy trust has in procedures to identify and mitigate financial risks and is the estate is safe and well maintained and complies with relevant regulations.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Plans for future periods

Aim and objectives for 2023-24

1. To increase % of children achieving standard in reading at KS1
2. To increase % children achieving standard in Maths at KS2
3. To continue to increase % children achieving standard in Writing at KS2 to meet National
4. To reduce persistent absence

We will continue to support our children with a 'team around the child' to support individual needs and ensure they reach their potential.

Auditor

Insofar as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are 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 auditors are aware of that information.

The Trustees' Report was approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on 18 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Ms J Davies
Chair

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of responsibility

As Trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Our Children 1st MAT has an effective and appropriate system of control, financial and otherwise. However, such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives, and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

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

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Head Teacher, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Our Children 1st MAT and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has formally met 3 times during the year. The board met less than 7 times due to the clearly established committees/portfolio groups of Trustees who can deal with specific areas of responsibility following robust terms of reference.

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

Trustee

Ms J Davies (Chair from 2 January 2023)	3	3
H Adams, Head Teacher and Accounting Officer	3	3
Mr S Bennet	1	3
Mrs H Bone	3	3
Mrs L Chalk	3	3
Mrs J Thackstone	3	3
Mr S Williams, (Chair until 1 January 2023)	1	3

Governance Review

The Board of Trustees have a governance action plan with clear priorities for the academic year. The Board of Trustees self-review process is ongoing and regularly timetabled throughout the year.

The Finance, Audit, Risk and Resources committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to: have oversight of two main areas of work, Audit and Risk Management and Financial strategy and performance.

Attendance during the year at meetings was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
H Bone (Chair)	3	3
J Thackstone (Vice)	3	3
L Chalk	3	3

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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Governance (continued)

The Curriculum Standards and Welfare committee is also a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to:

Attendance during the year at meetings was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
L Chalk (Chair)	3	3
J Davies (Vice)	3	3
J Thackstone	3	3

Review of Value for Money

As Accounting Officer, the Head Teacher 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 achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The Accounting Officer considers how the academy trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the Board of Trustees where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data or by using a framework where appropriate. The Accounting Officer for the academy trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by ensuring staff are deployed effectively throughout school.

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 Our Children 1st for the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 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 ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks that has been in place for the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

The risk and control framework

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

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

The Board of Trustees has decided to buy-in an internal audit service from Azets.

The internal auditor role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the academy trust's financial and other systems. In particular, the areas covered were as follows:

- Risk register
- School Number Data
- Register of Pecuniary Interests
- Website Review
- Financial Procedures, Accounting Records and Systems
- Whistleblowing Policy
- School Improvement Plan
- Year End Procedures
- Bank Procedures
- Data Security
- Monthly Management Reporting and KPI's
- Benchmarking
- Compliance and Governance
- GAG Income
-

During the year the internal auditor visited the school twice and reported their findings to the Board of Trustees, through the Audit, Risk and Resources 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 an annual summary report to the committee outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress.

Review of effectiveness

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

- the work of the internal auditor;
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process or the school resource management self-assessment.
- the work of the executive managers within the academy trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.
- the work of the external auditor.

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control. A management response plan to address findings to ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 18 December 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Ms J Davies
Chair

Mrs H Adams
Accounting Officer

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
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STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

As Accounting Officer of Our Children 1st 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 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 2022, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

I confirm that I and the academy trust Board of Trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of all funds by the academy trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the academy trust's funding agreement and the Academy Trust Handbook 2022.

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.

Mrs H Adams
Accounting Officer
Date: 18 December 2023

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

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

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

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

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

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

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

Ms J Davies
Chair

Date: 18 December 2023

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR CHILDREN 1ST

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Our Children 1st (the 'academy trust') for the year ended 31 August 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland', the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the academy trust's affairs as at 31 August 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the 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.

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR CHILDREN 1ST (CONTINUED)

Other information

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of Governors

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

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the 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 academy trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR CHILDREN 1ST (CONTINUED)

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Our audit must be alert to the risk of manipulation of the financial statements and seek to understand the incentives and opportunities for management to achieve this.

We undertake the following procedures to identify and respond to these risks of non-compliance:

- Understanding the key legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Trust. We communicated identified laws and regulations throughout the audit team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit. We determined the most significant of these to be the regulations set out by the DfE/ESFA. Our audit focuses on financial matters as set out in our regularity opinion. Other key laws and regulations included safeguarding, Health & Safety, GDPR and employment law
- Enquiry of trustees and management as to policies and procedures to ensure compliance and any known instances of non-compliance
- Review of board minutes and correspondence with regulators
- Enquiry of trustees and management as to areas of the financial statements susceptible to fraud and how these risks are managed
- Challenging management on key estimates, assumptions and judgements made in the preparation of the financial statements. These key areas of uncertainty are disclosed in the accounting policies
- Identifying and testing unusual journal entries, with a particular focus on manual journal entries.

Through these procedures, we did not become aware of actual or suspected non-compliance.

We planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards but owing to the inherent limitations of procedures required in these areas, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected a material misstatement in the accounts. The further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve concealment, collusion, forgery, misrepresentations, or override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

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

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR CHILDREN 1ST (CONTINUED)

Use of our report

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

Kevin Shotton BA BFP FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of

Clive Owen LLP

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors

140 Coniscliffe Road

Darlington

County Durham

DL3 7RT

18 December 2023

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY TO OUR CHILDREN 1ST AND THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 16 September 2022 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Our Children 1st during the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 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 Our Children 1st and ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to Our Children 1st 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 Our Children 1st and ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Our Children 1st's accounting officer and the reporting accountant

The Accounting Officer is responsible, under the requirements of Our Children 1st's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 23 March 2017 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2022, 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 2022 to 2023. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY TO OUR CHILDREN 1ST AND THE EDUCATION & SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY (CONTINUED)

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 work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- Review of governing body and committee minutes;
- Review of termly Internal Assurance reports;
- Completion of self assessment questionnaire by Accounting Officer;
- Review documentation provided to Trustees and Accounting Officer setting out responsibilities;
- Obtain formal letters of representation detailing the responsibilities of Directors;
- Review of payroll, purchases and expenses claims on a sample basis;
- Confirmation that the lines of delegation and limits set have been adhered to;
- Evaluation of internal control procedures and reporting lines;
- Review cash payments for unusual transactions;
- Review of credit card transactions;
- Review of registers of interests;
- Review related party transactions;
- Review of borrowing agreements;
- Review of land and building transactions;
- Review of potential and actual bad debts;
- Review an instance of gifts/hospitality to ensure in line with policy;
- Review whistleblowing procedures;
- Review pay policy and factors determining executive pay;
- Review of staff expenses;
- Review other income to ensure is in line with funding agreement;
- Review governance structure and number of meetings held; and
- Review whether there is a risk register in place.

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY TO OUR
CHILDREN 1ST AND THE EDUCATION & SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY (CONTINUED)**

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggest in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Reporting Accountant
Clive Owen LLP

140 Coniscliffe Road
Darlington
County Durham
DL3 7RT

Date: 18 December 2023

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	3	9	-	32	41	15
Charitable activities		51	4,089	-	4,140	3,704
Total income		<u>60</u>	<u>4,089</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>4,181</u>	<u>3,719</u>
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	5,6	172	3,973	306	4,451	4,369
Total expenditure		<u>172</u>	<u>3,973</u>	<u>306</u>	<u>4,451</u>	<u>4,369</u>
Net (expenditure)/ income		(112)	116	(274)	(270)	(650)
Transfers between funds	14	-	(191)	191	-	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		<u>(112)</u>	<u>(75)</u>	<u>(83)</u>	<u>(270)</u>	<u>(650)</u>
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension schemes	21	-	669	-	669	2,198
Asset Ceiling Restriction		-	(474)	-	(474)	-
Net movement in funds		<u>(112)</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>(83)</u>	<u>(75)</u>	<u>1,548</u>
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		202	390	5,056	5,648	4,100
Net movement in funds		(112)	120	(83)	(75)	1,548
Total funds carried forward		<u>90</u>	<u>510</u>	<u>4,973</u>	<u>5,573</u>	<u>5,648</u>

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 10631500

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £000		2022 £000
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets	11	4,927		5,043
		4,927		5,043
Current assets				
Debtors	12	204	362	
Cash at bank and in hand		799	595	
		1,003	957	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(357)	(214)	
Net current assets		646		743
Total assets less current liabilities		5,573		5,786
Net assets excluding pension asset / liability		5,573		5,786
Defined benefit pension scheme asset / liability	21	-		(138)
Total net assets		5,573		5,648
 Funds of the academy trust				
Restricted funds:				
Fixed asset funds	14	4,973	5,056	
Restricted income funds	14	510	528	
		5,483	5,584	
Restricted funds excluding pension asset	14	5,483	5,584	
Pension reserve	14	-	(138)	
Total restricted funds	14	5,483		5,446
Unrestricted income funds	14	90		202
Total funds		5,573		5,648

The financial statements on pages 28 to 54 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 18 December 2023 and are signed on their behalf, by:

Ms J Davies
Chair

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 10631500

BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £000	2022 £000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	16	362	(371)
Cash flows from investing activities			
	17	(158)	(190)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		204	(561)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		595	1,156
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	18, 19	799	595

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting policies

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

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

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

Our Children 1st 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 i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the academy trust to continue as a going concern. The Trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of at least one year from the date of authorisation for issue of the financial statements and have concluded that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern, thus they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.3 Income

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

• **Grants**

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

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

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

• **Donations**

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

• **Other income**

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

• **Donated fixed assets (excluding transfers on conversion or into the academy trust)**

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

1.4 Expenditure

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

• **Charitable activities**

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.5 Tangible fixed assets

Assets costing £3,000 or more are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

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

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets other than freehold land, at rates calculated to write off the cost of these assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Long-term leasehold property	- over 25 years
Long-term leasehold land	- over 125 years
Furniture and equipment	- over 5 years
Computer equipment	- over 3 years

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 Operating leases

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

1.7 Debtors

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

1.8 Cash at bank and in hand

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

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.9 Liabilities and provisions

Liabilities and provisions are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance Sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably. Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the academy trust anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar charges.

1.10 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 bases are as follows:

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 12. Prepayments are not financial instruments. Cash at bank is classified as a basic financial instrument and is measured at face value.

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

Financial liabilities - trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 13. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition. Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument.

1.11 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 Part 11, chapter 3 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.12 Pensions

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.

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

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

1.13 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 the funders where the asset acquired or created is held for a specific purpose.

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

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

2. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The 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 21, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2023. 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.

Goodwin

The case related to male spouse or civil partner of a female member is treated in the same way as a same-sex spouse or civil partner. Survivor benefits will be calculated using service from 1 April 1972, or 6 April 1978 if the marriage or civil partnership took place after the last day of pensionable service. This change will apply for deaths in respect of female members which occurred from 5 December 2005, which is the date that same-sex civil partnerships were introduced. This case was brought against the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Actuaries have estimated that the impact of Goodwin indexation to be less than 0.1% of total liabilities. Based on this estimate it would increase liabilities by £2,232 which has been assessed to be immaterial to the financial statements.

Depreciation — Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its residual value, over the economic life of that asset. An estimate of the useful life of assets is detailed in the depreciation accounting policy. The value of depreciation charge during the year was £306,000.

Critical areas of judgment:

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

The original Local Government Pension scheme valuation showed an asset of £474,000. That asset valuation is highly dependent on a number of assumptions and does not represent the future value of benefits to the trust. As a result, the Trustees have considered the potential benefits to the trust. On the basis that the future value of employer contributions in respect of future service cost £119,000 exceed the employer future service costs £115,000 combined with the fact that the last Local Government Scheme actuarial review set the contribution rates from 1 April 2023 and that these will not be revised until April 2026 the Trustees have decided to include the pension asset at £NIL.

OUR CHILDREN 1ST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

3. Income from donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Donations	9	-	9	4
Capital Grants	-	32	32	11
	<u>9</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>15</u>
	<u>4</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>15</u>	
Total 2022				

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4. Funding for the academy trust's educational operations

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Academy's educational operations				
DfE/ESFA grants				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	2,855	2,855	2,683
Other DfE/ESFA grants				
Pupil Premium	-	495	495	452
PE and Sport Premium	-	21	21	21
UIFSM	-	36	36	34
Rates	-	7	7	3
Teachers' pay grant	-	2	2	4
Teachers' pension grant	-	6	6	12
Other DfE Group grants	-	91	91	67
Mainstream Schools Additional Grant	-	43	43	-
Supplementary Grant	-	88	88	15
	-	3,644	3,644	3,291
Other Government grants				
SEN	-	50	50	23
Early Years Funding	-	337	337	202
Local Authority grants	-	21	21	10
	-	408	408	235
Other income from the academy trust's educational operations				
	51	-	51	131
COVID-19 additional funding (DfE/ESFA)				
Other DfE/ESFA COVID-19 funding	-	37	37	47
	-	37	37	47
	51	4,089	4,140	3,704
	51	4,089	4,140	3,704
Total 2022	52	3,652	3,704	

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5. Expenditure

	Staff Costs 2023 £000	Premises 2023 £000	Other 2023 £000	Total 2023 £000	Total 2022 £000
Academy's educational operations:					
Direct costs	2,675	-	294	2,969	3,017
Allocated support costs	340	328	814	1,482	1,352
	<u>3,015</u>	<u>328</u>	<u>1,108</u>	<u>4,451</u>	<u>4,369</u>
Total 2022	<u>2,989</u>	<u>610</u>	<u>770</u>	<u>4,369</u>	

In 2023 of the total expenditure £172,000 (2022 - £56,000) was to unrestricted funds, £3,973,000 (2022 - £4,025,000) was to restricted funds, and £306,000 (2022 - £288,000) was to restricted fixed assets.

There were no individual transactions exceeding £5,000 for:

Compensation payments
Gifts made by the academy trust
Fixed asset losses
Stock losses
Cash losses

The following transactions exceeding £5,000 were:

Unrecoverable debts - £6,625

There were no ex-gratia payments in the year.

6. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2023 £000	Support costs 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Academy's educational operations	<u>2,969</u>	<u>1,482</u>	<u>4,451</u>	<u>4,369</u>
Total 2022	<u>3,017</u>	<u>1,352</u>	<u>4,369</u>	

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6. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

Analysis of direct costs

	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Staff costs	2,675	2,707
Educational supplies	243	260
Staff development	-	25
Technology costs	19	16
Other costs	32	9
	<u>2,969</u>	<u>3,017</u>

Analysis of support costs

	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Net interest on pension scheme	7	36
Staff costs	340	282
Depreciation	306	288
Technology costs	62	23
Maintenance of premises	81	110
Cleaning	112	101
Other premises costs	22	26
Energy	86	57
Rent and rates	8	7
Insurance	23	21
Operating lease rentals	6	5
Catering	223	213
Other costs	187	166
Governance costs	19	17
	<u>1,482</u>	<u>1,352</u>

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7. Net (expenditure)/income

Net (expenditure)/income for the year includes:

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Operating lease rentals	6	5
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	306	288
Fees paid to auditors for:		
- audit	9	8
- other services	7	7
	6	28

8. Staff

a. Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Wages and salaries	2,247	2,079
Social security costs	209	185
Pension costs	539	725
	2,995	2,989
Agency staff costs	20	-
	3,015	2,989

Included in pension costs is a charge of £50,000 (2022: £280,000) relating to pension deficit actuarial adjustment.

b. Staff numbers

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

	2023 No.	2022 No.
Teaching	36	33
Educational Support	69	58
Admin & Management	6	6
	111	97

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8. Staff (continued)

c. Higher paid staff

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

	2023	2022
	No.	No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	3	-
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	1	1
	1	1

d. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the academy trust comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the academy trust was £483,000 (2022 £442,000).

9. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

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

		2023	2022
		£000	£000
Mrs H Adams	Remuneration	70 - 75	70 - 75
	Pension contributions paid	15 - 20	15 - 20

During the year ended 31 August 2023, no Trustee expenses have been incurred (2022 - £NIL).

10. Trustees' and Officers' insurance

In accordance with normal commercial practice the academy trust has purchased insurance to protect Trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy trust business. The insurance provides cover up to £5,000,000 on any one claim and it is not possible to quantify the Trustees and officers indemnity element from the overall insurance scheme for the year ended 31 August 2023.

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11. Tangible fixed assets

	Long-term leasehold property £000	Furniture and equipment £000	Computer equipment £000	Total £000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 September 2022	5,984	67	197	6,248
Additions	30	111	49	190
At 31 August 2023	<u>6,014</u>	<u>178</u>	<u>246</u>	<u>6,438</u>
Depreciation				
At 1 September 2022	1,093	14	98	1,205
Charge for the year	219	22	65	306
At 31 August 2023	<u>1,312</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>163</u>	<u>1,511</u>
Net book value				
At 31 August 2023	<u><u>4,702</u></u>	<u><u>142</u></u>	<u><u>83</u></u>	<u><u>4,927</u></u>
At 31 August 2022	<u><u>4,891</u></u>	<u><u>53</u></u>	<u><u>99</u></u>	<u><u>5,043</u></u>

12. Debtors

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Trade debtors	2	10
Prepayments and accrued income	145	120
VAT Debtor	57	232
	<u>204</u>	<u>362</u>

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13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Trade creditors	158	34
Other taxation and social security	48	43
Other creditors	14	14
Accruals and deferred income	137	123
	357	214
	357	214
	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	21	23
Resources deferred during the year	27	21
Amounts released from previous periods	(21)	(23)
	27	21
	27	21

At the balance sheet date the academy trust was holding funds of received in advance for UIFSM and SEN funding.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

14. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (Losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2023 £000
Unrestricted funds						
General Funds	202	60	(172)	-	-	90
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	528	2,855	(2,682)	(191)	-	510
Pupil Premium	-	495	(495)	-	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA Grants	-	163	(163)	-	-	-
SEN	-	50	(50)	-	-	-
Mainstream Schools Additional Grant	-	43	(43)	-	-	-
Supplementary Grant	-	88	(88)	-	-	-
Other Government grants	-	358	(358)	-	-	-
Other Covid-19 funding	-	37	(37)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(138)	-	(57)	-	195	-
	<u>390</u>	<u>4,089</u>	<u>(3,973)</u>	<u>(191)</u>	<u>195</u>	<u>510</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Legacy assets	4,409	-	(197)	-	-	4,212
Devolved Formula Capital grants	66	32	(6)	-	-	92
Capital expenditure from GAG	553	-	(103)	191	-	641
Donations	28	-	-	-	-	28
	<u>5,056</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>(306)</u>	<u>191</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,973</u>

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14. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (Losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2023 £000
Total Restricted funds	5,446	4,121	(4,279)	-	195	5,483
Total funds	5,648	4,181	(4,451)	-	195	5,573

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

The General Annual Grant (GAG) must be used for the normal running of the academy including salaries and related costs, overheads, repairs and maintenance, and insurance.

Pupil Premium is additional funding to be spent as the school sees fit to support deprived students.

Universal Infant Free School Meals (included within Other DfE/ESFA Grants) is funding to provide a free school lunch to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2.

Other DfE/ESFA Grants also includes the PE and sport premium grant, mainstream schools additional grant, supplementary grant, rates relief, teachers' pay grant and teachers' pension grant.

Other Government grants include Early Years funding for three and four year old children, funding for pupils with Special Educational Needs and other income from the local authority.

The pension reserves is the liability due to the deficit on the Local Government Pension Scheme. Further details are shown in note 21.

The restricted fixed asset funds represent monies received to purchase fixed assets. Depreciation is charged against each fund over the useful economic life of the associated assets.

Unrestricted funds include the income from uniform sales, school trips and catering with the relevant costs allocated accordingly.

A transfer of £191,000 has been made to capital expenditure from GAG to reflect those items included within fixed assets which have been purchased using GAG monies.

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the academy trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG it could carry forward at 31 August 2023.

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

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

	Balance at 1 September 2021 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (Losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2022 £000
Unrestricted funds						
General Funds	202	56	(56)	-	-	202
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	770	2,683	(2,740)	(185)	-	528
Pupil Premium	-	452	(452)	-	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA Grants	-	156	(156)	-	-	-
SEN	-	23	(23)	-	-	-
Other Government grants	-	212	(212)	-	-	-
ESFA Recovery Premium	-	47	(47)	-	-	-
Other Covid-19 funding	(42)	-	-	42	-	-
Catch-Up Premium	42	-	-	(42)	-	-
Other Income	-	79	(79)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(2,020)	-	(316)	-	2,198	(138)
	<u>(1,250)</u>	<u>3,652</u>	<u>(4,025)</u>	<u>(185)</u>	<u>2,198</u>	<u>390</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Legacy assets	4,608	-	(199)	-	-	4,409
Devolved Formula Capital grants	62	11	(7)	-	-	66
Capital expenditure from GAG	431	-	(63)	185	-	553
Donations	47	-	(19)	-	-	28
	<u>5,148</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>(288)</u>	<u>185</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,056</u>

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14. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2021 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (Losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2022 £000
Total Restricted funds	3,898	3,663	(4,313)	-	2,198	5,446
Total funds	4,100	3,719	(4,369)	-	2,198	5,648

15. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	4,927	4,927
Current assets	102	901	-	1,003
Creditors due within one year	(12)	(391)	46	(357)
Total	90	510	4,973	5,573

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £000	Restricted funds 2022 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2022 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	5,043	5,043
Current assets	203	732	22	957
Creditors due within one year	(1)	(204)	(9)	(214)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(138)	-	(138)
Total	202	390	5,056	5,648

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16. Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Net expenditure for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	(270)	(650)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	306	288
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(32)	(11)
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	50	280
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost/(income)	7	36
Decrease in debtors	158	(169)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	143	(145)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	362	(371)

17. Cash flows from investing activities

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(190)	(201)
Capital grants from DfE Group	32	11
Net cash used in investing activities	(158)	(190)

18. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Cash in hand and at bank	799	595
Total cash and cash equivalents	799	595

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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19. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 September 2022 £000	Cash flows £000	At 31 August 2023 £000
Cash at bank and in hand	595	204	799
	595	204	799
	595	204	799

20. Capital commitments

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Contracted for but not provided in these financial statements		
Acquisition of tangible fixed assets	-	19
	-	19

21. Pension commitments

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 Middlesbrough Borough Council. Both are multi-employer defined benefit schemes.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2016 and of the LGPS 31 August 2022.

Contributions amounting to £14,000 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2023 (2022 - £14,000) and are included within creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

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21. Pension commitments (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 specify 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 2016. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 5 March 2019. The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

- employer contribution rates set at 23.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administration levy)
- total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service to the effective date of £218,100 million and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £196,100 million, giving a notional past service deficit of £22,000 million
- the SCAPE rate, set by HMT, is used to determine the notional investment return. The current SCAPE rate is 2.4% above the rate of CPI, assumed real rate of return is 2.4% in excess of prices and 2% in excess of earnings. The rate of real earnings growth is assumed to be 2.2%. The assumed nominal rate of return including earnings growth is 4.45%.

The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2024.

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £351,000 (2022 - £317,000).

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

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The academy trust 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 contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2023 was £183,000 (2022 - £169,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £138,000 (2022 - £128,000) and employees' contributions totalled £45,000 (2022 - £41,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 17.2 % for employers and 5.5 to 12.5 % for employees.

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

Principal actuarial assumptions

	2023	2022
	%	%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.95	4.05
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.95	3.05
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.20	4.25
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.95	3.05
Commutation of pensions to lump sums	80.00	80.00

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21. Pension commitments (continued)

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

	2023 Years	2022 Years
Retiring today		
Males	20.5	21.7
Females	23.5	23.5
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	21.3	22.9
Females	25.0	25.3

Sensitivity analysis

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Discount rate +0.1%	(62)	(72)
Discount rate -0.1%	62	72
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	(89)	(105)
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	89	105
CPI rate +0.1%	53	64
CPI rate -0.1%	(53)	(64)

Share of scheme assets

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

	At 31 August 2023 £000	At 31 August 2022 £000
Equities	1,975	1,698
Property	622	449
Cash	109	349
Total market value of assets	2,706	2,496

The actual return on scheme assets was £68,000 (2022 - £140,000).

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21. Pension commitments (continued)

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

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Current service cost	(188)	(408)
Interest income	109	39
Interest cost	(116)	(75)
Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities	(195)	(444)

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

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Opening defined benefit obligation	2,634	4,226
Current service cost	188	408
Interest cost	116	75
Employee contributions	45	41
Actuarial gains	(723)	(2,097)
Benefits paid	(28)	(19)
Asset Ceiling Restriction	474	-
At 31 August 2022	2,706	2,634

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

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Opening fair value of scheme assets	2,496	2,206
Interest income	109	39
Actuarial (losses)/gains	(54)	101
Employer contributions	138	128
Employee contributions	45	41
Benefits paid	(28)	(19)
At 31 August 2022	2,706	2,496

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22. Operating lease commitments

At 31 August 2023 the academy trust had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Within 1 year	6	6
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	9	15
	<u>15</u>	<u>21</u>

23. 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. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook, including notifying the ESFA of all transactions made on or after 1 April 2019 and obtaining their approval where required, and with the academy trust's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures relating to connected and related party transactions.

Expenditure Related Party Transaction

H Adams' husband was a director of Itchyrobot UK Limited during the period, the academy trust purchased goods totalling £14,000 (2022: £2,000). There was £Nil outstanding at 31 August 2023 (2022: £Nil).