

Company Registration No. 07635098 (England and Wales)

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

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THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Trustees

S Brown* (Chair of Trustees)
T Magill (Vice Chair of Trustees)
D Balogun
S Cook (resigned on 20/09/23)
L Dalton* (associate Trustee from 22/2/22)
M Holness
S Hume* (Accounting Officer)
I Paget (associate Trustee)
M Rosewell (associate Trustee)
G Stonell*

*Members of the Finance, Premises and Audit Committee

Members

D Cheesman
J Driels
R Frogley
S Stears
J Wright

Academies Operated

Abbey Primary School, Morden
Aragon Primary School, Morden
Glenthorne High School, Sutton

Trust Senior Leadership Team

- Chief Executive Officer	S Hume
- Headteacher at Glenthorne High School	S Peacock
- Headteacher at Abbey Primary School	A Stirling-Williams
- Headteacher at Aragon Primary School	C Ryder
- Deputy Headteacher at Glenthorne	S Walker
- Deputy Headteacher at Glenthorne	M Alletson
- Deputy Headteacher at Abbey	B Bedforth
- Deputy Headteacher at Aragon	A Gilbert

Secretary

M Gill

Company registration number

07635098 (England and Wales)

Registered office

Glenthorne High School
Sutton Common Road
Sutton
Surrey
SM3 9PS
United Kingdom

Independent auditor

Baxter & Co
Lynwood House
Crofton Road
Orpington
Kent
BR6 8QE

Bankers

Lloyds Bank PLC
49-53 High Street
Sutton
Surrey
SM1 1DT

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Solicitors

Winckworth Sherwood
Arbor,
255 Blackfriars Rd,
London
SE1 9AX

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

The Trustees present their annual report together with the accounts and independent auditor's reports of the charitable company for the year 01 September 2022 to 31 August 2023. The annual report serves the purpose of both a trustees' report, and a directors' report under company law.

The principal activity of the company is the operation of state-funded Academies, Glenthorne High School, Aragon Primary School and Abbey Primary School, providing state education for pupils aged 3 to 19 serving a catchment area in Sutton and Merton. The Trust has a capacity of 2743 and had a roll of 2667 in the school census in January 2023. The Trust also oversees the Sutton SCITT – Ofsted outstanding-rated teacher training provision in South London.

Structure, governance and management

Constitution

The Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee incorporated on 16 May 2011, and the predecessor school converted to academy status on 1 July 2011. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are its primary governing documents. On 7 July 2017, the company changed its name to The Willow Learning Trust and adopted new articles of association to allow it to operate as a Multi Academy Trust. On 1 August 2017, Aragon Primary School joined the trust and on 1 September 2018, Abbey Primary School joined the Trust. The articles of association were updated in June 2022 to reflect changes to the model articles.

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year, are set out in the Reference and Administrative Details section on pages 1 and 2.

Members' liability

The Willow Learning Trust is registered under the Companies Act 2006 as a company limited by guarantee without a share capital. Each member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of the company being wound up while they are a member, or within one year after they cease to be a member. The liability of the members is limited to £10 each for the debts and liabilities contracted before they ceased to be a member. The Academy Trust is an exempt charity.

Trustees' Indemnities

No indemnities or guarantees have been provided to third parties by the charitable company in respect of any of its trustees.

Method of recruitment and appointment or election of Trustees

In accordance with the articles, the Trustees of the charitable company are appointed as follows:

- a) Up to nine Trustees appointed by the Members
- b) A minimum of two parent Trustees elected by parents may be elected in the absence of a Local Governing Body
- c) The Chief Executive Officer, should they agree to act as a Trustee
- d) Further Trustees may be co-opted by the Trustees

In respect of those appointed by the Members, (a) above, when a vacancy arises, the Members seek to make an appointment that would maximise the relevant skills and experience on the board as a whole whilst maintaining a balanced constitution.

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of Trustees

The training and induction provided for new Trustees will depend on their existing experience. Where necessary, induction will provide training in charity and educational, legal and financial matters. All Trustees are provided with the information needed (including policies, minutes, budgets, etc) to undertake their role as Trustees.

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Organisational structure

The Board of Trustees, the majority of whom are non-executive, comprises those persons appointed under the Articles of Association. The Board meets at least four times a year and has several committees, including a Finance, Premises and Audit Committee, Personnel Committee, Standards Committee and Local Governing Bodies. All of these Committees are formally constituted with terms of reference and comprise appropriately qualified and experienced members.

Trustees delegate specific responsibilities to its Committees, the activities of which are reported to and discussed at full Trustee Board Meetings. Day to day management of the Trust is undertaken by the Chief Executive Officer, supported by the senior leaders at Trust schools. The Chief Executive Officer is the Accounting Officer and the Director of Finance is the Chief Financial Officer.

The Trust has no subsidiaries.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) are the key management personnel of the trust. Trustees are also classed as senior management although they receive no pay or other remuneration in respect of their role as Trustees. Where staff trustees are in place, they receive remuneration for their role as members of staff and their pay is determined in the same way as applicable to all other staff in line with the Trust's Pay & Conditions Policy. Further details of remuneration paid to staff who are trustees is set out within the notes to the accounts.

The pay of the Chief Executive Officer is set annually by the Trustees' Performance Review Panel, taking account of performance against objectives set the previous year. Pay of SLT members is agreed by the Personnel Committee, again taking into account performance against previously agreed objectives, the agreed pay structure for the SLT and any recommendations made by the Chief Executive Officer.

Trade Union Facility Time

Relevant union officials

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

Percentage of time spent on facility time

Percentage of time	Number of Employees
0%	2
1% - 50%	0
51% - 99%	0
100%	0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Total Cost of facility time	£2,275.60
Total Pay bill	£14,351K
Percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time	0.016%

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours.	0%
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Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

The Academy Trust does not have a sponsor and is not related to any other charitable trust or other party.

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Engagement with employees (including disabled persons)

The following statement summarises action taken during the period to introduce, maintain or develop arrangements aimed at:

- providing employees with information on matters of concern to them
- consulting employees or their representatives regularly so that the views of employees can be considered in making decisions which are likely to affect their interests
- encouraging the involvement of employees in the Trust's performance
- achieving a common awareness on the part of all employees of the factors affecting the performance of the Trust.
- The Trust's policy in respect of applications for employment from disabled persons, the treatment of employees who become disabled and the training, career development and promotion of disabled persons.

The Trust places immense value on the involvement of its employees and has continued to keep them informed on matters affecting them as employees and on the various factors affecting the performance of the Trust. This is achieved through formal and informal meetings, working parties, team briefings and internal newsletters/updates. Employee representatives are consulted regularly on a wide range of matters affecting their current and future interests.

In respect of disabled persons, the policy of the Trust is to support recruitment and retention of students, staff and Trustees/Governors with disabilities. Lifts, ramps and disabled toilets are installed and door widths are adequate to enable wheelchair access to all the main areas of all the schools. The Trust does this by adapting the physical environment, making support resources available and through relevant training. Our policy is to promote the career development and promotion of disabled persons, irrespective of the nature of their disability and we will provide whatever assistance we reasonably can do in order to support the individual in meeting their career goals, ensuring that there is a 'level playing field' for all.

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

The Trust recognises the importance of maintaining good business relationships with its suppliers. We have a clear procurement policy to ensure that suppliers are treated in an even-handed manner. The performance of and relationship with key suppliers is constantly monitored to ensure that we treat suppliers fairly, ensuring that payment terms are adhered to and that we comply with contractual obligations placed upon the Trust. We encourage an open and ongoing dialogue with suppliers to ensure that we conduct our business with them in a professional commercial manner.

Objectives and activities

Our objects and aims, described below, put pupils and students at the heart of all that we do. We have described our main achievements within the Strategic Report and also how we have performed against our objectives. We are committed to ensuring that we maintain strong and effective relationships with students, parents and wider stakeholders in the community.

Objects and aims

The principal object of the company is to advance, for the public benefit, education in the United Kingdom. It achieved this object principally through the operation of Glenthorne High School, Aragon Primary School and Abbey Primary School, the aim being to provide the highest possible standard of education and pastoral care, maximising the life-chances of its pupils and students.

Objectives, strategies and activities

The main objectives for the Willow Learning Trust during the year were:

- Plan recruitment, retention and wellbeing strategies to ensure that each school in the WLT enhances the wellbeing of staff and is able to remain fully staffed with high quality staff.
 - Make best and most efficient use of resources to ensure Trust's financial security and enable capital investment.
 - Achieve a balanced budget.
 - Invest in school buildings and facilities and to ensure that individual schools within the Trust will be better equipped to withstand future financial pressures.
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- Work with schools to develop and enhance opportunities for children within the Trust and to ensure that all schools to show positive pupil progress in Y6, Y11 and Y13
- Develop collaboration both within and outside the WLT to improve teaching and learning, share best practice and centres of excellence for each school with the ultimate aim of expanding the Trust to maximise economies of scale.
 - Plan and implement a project on shared planning to improve planning and reduce workload.
 - Appoint a Director of English (Primaries) to facilitate collaboration and high standards in English across the Primary Schools within the Trust.
 - Plan collaborative activities with schools outside the Trust to build relationships and develop connections.
- Plan and implement the Digital Project to:
 - Future proof the Trust by moving content to a Cloud platform
 - Create digitally literate pupils
 - Integrate technology to make teaching more engaging
 - Facilitate collaboration between WLT schools.
- Have a robust marketing strategy to improve knowledge of and interest in all the schools of the WLT:
 - By updating the websites of the Trust and all its schools
 - By making local schools aware of best practice at the WLT.
- Work with the SCITT Director to maximise SCITT recruitment and ensure that it meets the re-accreditation requirements for September 2024.

The main objectives for Abbey Primary School during the year were to:

Raise standards in writing.

- Review spelling scheme to ensure common exception words and spelling rules
- Promote writing for pleasure.
- Review SOW to ensure diversity of texts and authors.

Raise standards in phonics and reading.

- Introduce Let's Read sessions in Reception and Y1, three times a week.
- Run phonics interventions for target Y2 children.
- Promote reading for pleasure. Resource a community library to promote reading for pleasure.

Ensure children with SEND make strong progress within the context of their need.

- Early identification of need by introducing speech and language

Diminish the difference in attainment and progress between disadvantaged children and their non-disadvantaged peers.

- Identify barriers to learning for disadvantaged children.
- Tight tracking of disadvantaged children, monitor progress, to ensure targeted academic support/interventions in place.

Raise pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism.

- Engage parents as soon as possible where there are attendance concerns.
- Review the behaviour policy.

Increase pupil participation in extra-curricular activities.

- Promote extra-curricular clubs through assemblies.
- Continue to provide a wide rich of experiences e.g., workshops, residentials.

Embed the new 'wider curriculum' schemes through effective curriculum leadership.

- CPD for subject leaders on deep dives: intent assessment, links across subjects, strengths, areas to develop, gap analysis.
- Map the curriculum for all year groups to build skills and knowledge from Nursery to Year 6.

The main objectives for Aragon Primary School during the year were to:

KS2 standards

- Maintain standards at Aragon to be in the top 20% (FFT) of schools for progress nationally, maintaining high attainment in both 'expected' and 'greater depth'

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KS1 standards

- To be in line or above national average in all core subjects

Maths

- To introduce a 'keep-up' session for pupils who struggle with Maths to ensure they develop their understanding and fluency, based on the Little Wandle Reading catch-up programme in Years 1-6.
- To introduce Rekenreks to help children in EYFS/KS1 build good number sense through the maths mastery approach that uses hands-on activities to help children make meaningful connections to early years maths concepts.

Phonics

- Embed Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised – 2nd year
- PSC in Year 1 – 90%+
- Keep-up sessions
- Let's Read sessions

Reading

- To raise the profile of reading for pleasure in the school

Gender gap

- Narrow the gap between boys and girls in Year 3 and 4 in writing to less than 20%
- To close the gender gap in Year 4 and 5 to ensure boys make better than expected progress in reading.

SEND

- Class teachers to identify underachieving children and provide them with appropriate wave 1/Ordinarily Available support.

EAL

- EAL lead to have responsibility for monitoring the progress of EAL children in RWM.

Pupil Premium

- To monitor the spending of the PP fund and ensure PP children have the same offer of education/enrichment to non-PP children.

Y2 Planning Pilot

- To trial group planning sessions across the primary schools (initially, in Year 2) to raise standards and lessen workload.

Digital Champions Pilot

- To create more digitally literate staff and children.

Curriculum/Foundation subjects

- To develop the role of subject leaders through the curriculum review cycle and other CPD

Behaviour and attitudes

Attendance and Punctuality

- Attendance to rise to 94.5%
- Persistent absence <12%

OPAL

- To embed the practice introduced since Summer 1 2022

Behaviour Policy Review (SEND)

- Review the behaviour policy and evaluate if it is fit for purpose for our SEND children

CPD

- Create an informative, ambitious programme of CPD for teachers, TAs, office staff and SLT.
-

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Parental Engagement

- To continue to improve communication with parents through:
 - Newsletter
 - TV screens in the office
 - ParentMail
 - Curriculum Maps
 - Socials

Cultural Capital

- To ensure there are equal opportunities for children to partake in a variety of after and before school clubs.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- To have an EDI lead, who will attend appropriate training and cascade to staff.

Well-being

- To devise Mental Health & Well-Being Action Plan
- To write a Mental Health & Well-Being Policy

EYFS

- To ensure the new EYFS framework is fully embedded, so the curriculum is coherently planned and accurately assessed

The main objectives for Glenthorne High School during the year were to:

Improving the Quality of Education:

- By developing the KS3 & 4 Curriculum to ensure equality of access for all to the National Curriculum
- By developing consistently high-quality, adaptive T&L across the school to ensure equality of provision for all
- By continuing to improve the quality and consistency of home learning
- By developing assessment at KS3 to ensure greater pupil understanding of achievement for pupils and to improve the quality of reports to parent
- By developing STEM provision to ensure improved outcomes and access for all pupils
- By developing Performing & Creative Arts provision to ensure improved outcomes, participation, and access for all pupils.
- By improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Improving Behaviour & Attitudes

- By maintaining outstanding behaviour and attitudes across the school
- By improving attendance and reducing levels of persistent absenteeism
- By implementing, monitoring and evaluating strategies to eradicate low level bullying

Improving Personal Development

- By improving support for pupils to enable them to become self-managers of their wellbeing and implement strategies that enhance their mental health
- By improving the impact of the House System
- By improving the quality of Independent Advice and Guidance for all pupils

Improving Leadership

- By improving the leadership of SEND provision so that all SEND pupils are supported to access provision in line with non-SEND pupils.
 - By improving Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and practice
 - By improving IT systems and infrastructure to facilitate provision of outstanding quality of education
 - By improving school premises to ensure a safe and effective use of space and resources.
 - By developing CPD programme to ensure that teachers are supported to deliver outstanding quality of education
 - By improving inclusion for all members of the school community
 - By improving staff wellbeing and work life balance
 - By continuing to develop and implement effective monitoring and self-evaluation protocols to enable continual improvement of quality of education at GHS
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Improving the Sixth Form

- By establishing and embedding the ethos and expectations of the Sixth Form to align with the whole school
- By developing curriculum leadership within the 6th form in order to improve impact for all pupils

Public benefit

In setting the objectives and planning the associated activities, Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Strategic report

Achievements and performance

It has been another challenging year for the Trust and schools within the Trust, but highly successful, particularly in terms of standards, with all schools maintaining high standards of behaviour and attitudes and achieving results in national tests at at least national averages and well above national averages on many measures. The after-effects of Covid are still having an impact on attainment and progress, and, in particular, on pupil attendance. Financial challenges have been significant and despite additional funding from the government, salary, energy and the costs of materials and equipment have risen substantially

In the area of governance, the revised scheme of delegation has been embedded and is working well, providing the additional LGB autonomy desired. There is effective communication and clear lines of accountability between Trustees and Governors and local representatives and parents are involved and highly committed to their schools.

The Trust has developed, updated and articulated its vision to reflect its values and priorities and to promote Trust growth. The Trust and all its schools have developed new websites over the course of the year which articulate their vision and values in a modern and vibrant way. The Trust has continued to identify opportunities to support growth and has developed partnerships and collaborations with local schools and Trusts.

Investment in the building and facilities of Willow Learning Trust schools has continued and there has been significant investment in its schools:

- The Bulge Class expansion project at Glenthorne has been completed, providing additional classroom space and high-quality facilities for the 6th Form.
- The CIF application process was successful, with both Glenthorne and Abbey being awarded over £1 million each for fire compliance improvements: much of the work was completed over the summer holidays and will be continued into October half term and the Christmas holidays.
- At Glenthorne, a section of the BB Windows has been replaced; the Hall and Gym floors have been replaced and additional solar panels have been installed on the Sports Hall roof.
- At Abbey, the boys' toilets and the Quad have been refurbished.
- At Aragon, the front of the school has been repainted and there has been a programme of classroom re-decoration.

Operationally, the common Trust web-based finance, HR and payroll platform has been embedded, although further developments to the electronic HR system are planned over the next year. Additional recruitment and retention strategies and initiatives were planned for implementation from September 2023, including Golden Hellos for teachers, Christmas payments for staff, long-service rewards and a Working from Home pilot scheme; indeed, some have already been implemented, including the Electric Vehicle salary sacrifice scheme. The loss of two key members of the finance team was a challenge and had an impact in the last three months of the year, as they were replaced on a temporary basis by agency staff. We have identified some weaker areas in our financial procedures which we will address with the arrival of our new Director of Finance.

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Objectives for 2023/24

The Trust will focus this year on:

Maintaining high standards:

- Maintaining the highest standards at all three schools, both in academic progress and attainment and in behaviour and attitudes.
- Focusing on improving teaching and learning and school provision so that school reviews/OFSTED reports reflect positively on all three schools.

Ensure high quality staffing at WLT schools:

- Implement planned recruitment and retention strategies as agreed by the Personnel Committee.
- Ensuring excellent staffing at WLT schools by implementing effective wellbeing, retention and recruitment strategies
- Continue to rationalise and computerise central and local functions of the Trust, particularly HR through the development of Every, to achieve efficiencies and reduce workload

Improving the buildings, premises and services of its schools through:

- Allocating resources to buildings improvement and ensuring that pupils and staff have access to state-of-the-art facilities and equipment;
- Applications for additional funding through the DFE "Condition improvement fund" (CIF) and other funding sources.
- Seeking planning permission for a MUGA adjacent to Glenthorne High School and tendering the work for completion for September 2024.
- Tendering for a new catering contract at Glenthorne for September 2024.

Sound financial management:

- Establishing our new Finance team with new Finance Director and Finance Officer;
- Looking for economies and economies of scale to reduce costs and means to increase income.
- Ensuring robust financial systems and procedures with rigorous authorisation procedures,

Developing further collaboration between Trust schools through:

- Shared planning projects in Primary Schools
- The development of the shared Primary English curriculum through the Primary Director of English.
- The second year of the Digital Project led by the Trust Digital Director in all three schools.

Supporting the Sutton SCITT:

- Supporting the Sutton SCITT with recruitment and preparation for the new quality standards framework to be introduced in September 2024.

Exploring growth through:

- Promoting collaboration, offering CPD opportunities and building relationships with local schools.
- Exploring a merger with a similar-sized local Trust with shared values.

Achievements and performance at Abbey Primary School

The school has developed rapidly over the last year and enjoyed a highly successful year under the strong leadership of its Headteacher, ensuring that children are learning in a safe, creative and purposeful way and that expectations are high. The school was inspected in March 2023 and was judged to be a good school. A modern and attractive new website has been developed to improve communication and to market the school effectively. The school has introduced its new uniform. The school is in the second phase of implementing digital literacy with the effective use of laptops to enhance learning. Communication with staff has continued to improve; staff are happy at the school and

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

proud to be members of staff at Abbey; staff are also given opportunities to contribute to school improvement through formal and informal means.

Outcomes in the formal assessments were excellent. The percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development in the EYFS was 75%. Year 1s' Phonics Screening Test results were 85%, which is above the national average of 75%. KS1 results of Reading (70%), Mathematics (77%) and Writing (67%) were all higher than the national averages. The percentages of those achieving at greater depth were all at national average or above. At KS2, the results in Reading (84%), Writing (81%) and Mathematics (86%) were all well above the national average; the percentages of those achieving at greater depth were positive. The school's progress at KS2 was +1.1 at the 67th percentile for Writing; +2.3 at the 83rd percentile for Reading; and +3.4 at the 92nd percentile for Maths.

The school continued to run a range of extra-curricular activities, offering a varied selection of after-school clubs designed to help parents balance work and family commitments, whilst providing children with study support, and offering them a broader range of experiences and interests at an affordable cost.

The school's learning environment and accommodation has been improved significantly, including the new quad from a successful bid and refurbished boys' toilets from school resources.

Key objectives for 2023/24

Abbey Primary School will focus this year on:

- Ensuring that children with SEND make good progress
- Ensuring that the curriculum is well sequenced, and teachers are confident to deliver
- Raising pupils' attendance and reducing persistent absence
- Managing wellbeing

Achievements and performance at Aragon Primary School

The school has continued to develop impressively over the last year under the strong leadership of its Headteacher, ensuring that children are learning in a safe, creative and purposeful way and that expectations are high. A modern and attractive new website has been developed to improve communication and to market the school effectively.

Outcomes in the formal assessments were excellent. The percentage of children achieving a good level of development in the EYFS was 73%. Year 1s' Phonics Screening Test results were excellent, with an 88% pass rate, 13% above the national average. KS1 results improved significantly from the previous year and were significantly above the national average: Reading (77%), Writing (70%) and Maths (83%) The percentages of those achieving at greater depth were all at national average or above. KS2 results were excellent, with Reading (90%) and Writing (93%) Mathematics (93%) well above the national average. The percentages of those achieving at greater depth were impressive: 56.7% of pupils achieved Greater Depth in Maths (National Average 23.8%), 40.5% in Reading (NA: 29%) and 26.7% in Writing (NA: 13.3%). The school's progress at KS2 was +1.2 at the 68th percentile for Reading; +2.5 at the 87th percentile for Writing; and +3.7 at the 93rd percentile for Maths.

The school made significant changes to the content and delivery of the wider curriculum which led to improvements in these subjects.

The school's OPAL programme is continuing to transform break and lunchtimes and the school is hoping to be presented with the "Gold" Award later this year.

Key objectives for 2023/24

Aragon Primary School will focus this year on:

- Developing extended writing in the wider curriculum
 - Developing a reading for pleasure culture.
 - Introducing "Rapid Catch-up" throughout KS2 to help pupils catch up in reading
 - Ensuring at least good progress for the least able 20% through Ordinarily Available Provision and Quality First teaching.
 - Providing opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school through pupil voice
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

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Achievements and performance at Glenthorne High School

The school has continued to develop and grow successfully over the last year under the strong leadership of its Headteacher. External examinations took place this year and national standards reverted close to 2019 levels. The school achieved exceptional GCSE and A-level results well above national averages and the school scored a +0.8 Progress 8 score on the 94th percentile showing that pupils made excellent progress:

- At GCSE, 44% of grades awarded were at Grade 7+, with 89% achieving En & Maths at 4+ and 73% achieving En and Maths at 5+. 58% gained the E-Bacc at 4+ and 47% gained the E-Bacc at 5+.
- Progress in English GCSE was +1.0 and on the 94th percentile; in Maths 0.6 and on the 90th percentile; in Science +1.0 and on the 97th percentile; and in MFL and Humanities +0.8.
- Y13s did exceptionally well and enjoyed great success and in their university applications:
 - At A level, 11% achieved A*, 32% gained A*/A and 73% A*-B.
 - 76% of Year 13 students achieved their first-choice universities, 28% of whom went on to study STEM subjects at universities. 14 students applied for Oxbridge and 14 for medicine and dentistry; 39 students (36%) went to Russell Group Universities and one to Oxford.

The school provided a comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, including trips to the theatre and historical monuments, educational visits to the Battlefields in Belgium, a PGL visit to Liddington, a ski trip to Saalbach and a 6th Form trip to Washington DC. Year 8 pupils enjoyed a range of activities during Challenge week including archery, Tag, Abseiling and the Vertical Challenge and over a hundred Year 7 pupils opted for a week camping and completing Bushcraft activities in Kent!

The Performing Arts continued to thrive at Glenthorne and the school held a number of successful performances, including the Whole School Production: FAME (January 2023), Winter Music Concert (February 2023), IMPACT Dance Show celebrating its 20th Anniversary at Wimbledon Theatre (March 2023), Summer Music Concert, Rising stars (April 2023), Battle of the Bands (May 2023), Inspire Dance show (June 2023), Drama Showcase (June 2023), Glastonhome (July 2023). The school also celebrated the performing arts in its Arts Festival at Glenthorne from 26th June-8th July 2023. 400 pupils from years 7 to 11 showcased the work they had completed in their lessons and in extra-curricular clubs. There were live music and Arts activities at lunchtimes, with both pupils and colleagues engaged in celebrating the Performing Arts at Glenthorne.

Year 10 were Mock Bar trial runners-up in the national mock trial competition. In March 2023, 10 GHS pupils took part in events following the Intermediate Maths Challenge. These ten pupils performed very well in the challenge and qualified to participate in the Kangaroo Challenges, which are only held for the top 8,000 pupils across the UK and the Hamilton Olympiad which only the very top 1,500 pupils in this age group qualify for.

In sport, Glenthorne came first in the Co-educational Schools Cup for athletics for the 5th year at the Borough Sports. The Year 7 netball team won their league after being undefeated all season. The Year 9 Boys' football team were crowned champions in the Sutton Schools' League

Glenthorne's award-winning Librarian, Mr Maxwell, was named overall winner in the "School Reading Champion" category in the Farshore Reading for Pleasure Teacher Awards 2022 in association with The Open University and the UK Literacy Association. Mr Maxwell was recognised for his work in establishing and overseeing the annual pupil-led "Bookling Award"

The school applied for the Challenge Award and was once again successful, with oracy highlighted as a strength. Glenthorne is one of only four schools in the country to successfully be recognised as such four times in a row.

In terms of premises, the new Queen Elizabeth II Wing for 6th Formers was completed, providing environmentally-friendly, state-of-the-art study and social facilities for 6th Formers. The school now has four "Bulge Classes" of 290 in Years 7-11 and the roll is 1,765. A section of the BB Windows has been replaced; the Hall and Gym floors have been replaced and additional solar panels have been installed on the Sports Hall roof. The school successfully sought approval and funding of £1m from Sutton Council for the development of a Multi-Use Games area (MUGA) adjacent to the school. The school has now applied for planning permission and is awaiting a decision.

Key objectives for 2023/24

Glenthorne High School will focus this year on:

- Developing the KS3 and KS4 curriculum to ensure equality of access for all to the National Curriculum.
 - Developing consistent high quality adaptive teaching across the school
-

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

- Improving attendance and reducing persistent absence
- Improving the quality of Independent Advice and Guidance for all pupils
- Improving staff wellbeing and work-life balance
- Establishing and embedding the ethos and expectations of the 6th Form to align with the whole school.

SCITT achievements and performance

The SCITT, under the leadership of Kate Potts, continued to provide excellent Initial Teacher Training for its trainees. The numbers were lower, in line with much-reduced national numbers, with 25 Secondary and 20 Primary trainees; however, the outcomes for trainees were impressive and over 95% are now employed as teachers, many of whom in local schools. The Sutton SCITT continued to work on re-accreditation activities for the new quality standard framework to start in September 2024 and planning for the enhanced training required of mentors for the new framework. The SCITT Leadership Team updated its website and marketing strategies and successfully recruited 42 Secondary and 8 Primary trainees for 2023/24.

Key objectives for 2023/24:

The Sutton SCITT will this year focus on:

- Improving trainee recruitment to ensure the future viability of the programme.
- Planning for the new quality standard framework, particularly in terms of the curriculum, the role and training of mentors and the delivery of Intensive Training and Practice modules.
- Reviewing staffing structures in preparation for the new quality standards.
- Continuing to provide the highest quality training and ensuring that current trainees are ECT-ready for September 2024.

Key performance indicators

The key financial indicators for the year were as follows

- Staff costs (excluding the effect of FRS102 LGPS deficit valuation adjustment and supply costs) should not exceed 75% of revenue income (excluding transfers on conversion) received in the financial year. For 2022/23 staff costs were 77% of revenue income (78% in 2021/22).
- The financial year 2022/23 resulted in an 'in-year' revenue surplus of £608k

Other key performance indicators, particularly relating to standards, have been included in the school sections above:

- Despite falling rolls in primary, all schools have healthy school rolls:
 - Abbey 425 pupils on roll; Aragon 567 pupils on roll; Glenthorne 1,765 pupils on roll.
- Attendance was above the national average in all three schools:
 - Glenthorne: 93.5%
 - Aragon: 94.2%
 - Abbey: 94.4%

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, the Board of Trustees continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the accounts. The Board of Trustees has considered the following evidence in reaching this assessment: identified risks, management accounts and cashflow, pupil numbers, available reserves and adequacy of board skills. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the statement of accounting policies.

Promoting the success of the company

Members, Trustees and Governors all work together to promote the success of the Trust to achieve its charitable purposes. They have regard to:

- the likely consequences of any decision in the long term
 - the interests of the Trust's employees
 - the need to foster the Trust's educational and business relationships with pupils, parents, stakeholders, suppliers, customers and other schools through collaboration.
-

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- the impact of the Trust's operations on the community and the environment
- the desirability of the Trust maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct
- the need to act fairly and reasonably

Financial review

We receive our income from a number of different sources. The majority of our income comes from central government via the Education and Skills Funding Agency who provide us with grants, based largely on our student numbers to cover our staffing and other general running costs (General Annual Grant - GAG). The ESFA may provide us with additional grants which are earmarked for specific purposes (such as Pupil Premium which must be used to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils). These appear in the accounts as DfE/ESFA grants. Where we receive grant or other funding from the Local Authority (such as where we undertake responsibilities on their behalf in respect of our students) this appears in the accounts as Other government grants. Such income is collectively referred to as "Restricted Funds". Other income is received from parents (for example as contributions to trip or other costs) – all schools have school funds with contributions from parents and the Primary Schools have Parent Teacher Associations which raise funds for the school – and from third parties (for example from our bank for interest on our account balances or from others who are charged for their use of our facilities). Such other income may be restricted or unrestricted, depending on whether it comes to us with conditions as to its use or whether it is available for spending at the discretion of the trustees.

We hold funds in two broad categories, funds which are available for spending and other funds which are not available for spending.

Spendable funds are in turn sub-categorised between those which are available for spending at the discretion of trustees ("Unrestricted Funds") and those which are subject to condition or restriction, ("Restricted Funds").

Funds not available for spending include the book value of fixed assets such as land, buildings and equipment. These have a value and are therefore included as assets in the accounts but, clearly, we cannot spend this value. In common with all academies and Local Authorities, our share of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) deficit must also be reflected in our accounts and as this is not a conventional liability, it does not need to be deducted from spendable funds. We meet our obligations in respect of the LGPS by paying over pension contributions due as calculated by the scheme's actuaries.

The following balances held were held at 31 August:

Fund	Category	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
GAG	Restricted General Funds	2,227	1,394
Other DfE/ESFA Grants	Restricted General Funds	-	-
Other government grants	Restricted General Funds	-	-
Other Income	Restricted General Funds	21	14
	Sub-total General Restricted Funds	2,248	1,408
Unspent Capital Grants	Restricted Fixed Asset Fund	801	1,715
Salix Loans	Restricted Fixed Asset Fund	-	(4)
Other Income	Unrestricted General Fund	132	364
	Sub-Total Spendable Funds	3,181	3,483
Net Book Value of Fixed Assets	Restricted Fixed Asset Fund	59,223	56,674
Share of LGPS Deficit	Restricted Pension Reserve	(213)	(3,254)
	Total All Funds	62,191	56,903

During the year under review there was an increase of £840k (2022: increase of £579k) on general restricted funds, a decrease of £232k (2022: increase of £36k) on unrestricted funds and after LGPS valuation adjustments, depreciation and capital income and expenditure, an overall increase of £6,999k (2022: increase of £9,638k).

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

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The key risks to the Trust are pupil numbers, energy costs, staff salary rises and staff sickness. Pupil numbers are the principal factor in school income and there have been significant rises in the costs of energy and staff over the last 12 months. Whilst we are through the Covid pandemic, there is still significant staff sickness which results in additional costs for supply and cover staff. There are older parts to each of the schools in the Trust, so significant investment has to be made into the fabric of the buildings and the facilities provided. Another key challenge is the recruitment and retention of staff which is not only a challenge to ensure quality of education and services, but also presents financial challenges.

We are planning carefully for these risks and have included sufficient funds in our budgets to cover these costs while seeking to reduce energy costs where possible. Despite these risks, the Trust budgets remain healthy and there are no material deficits, with expected carry-forwards in years 1 and 2 of our three-year budgets. The surplus budgets are a result of careful financial planning and effective controls, particularly important is the shadow staffing structure which ensures control over staffing costs. Monthly management accounts and cashflow are reviewed with Headteachers, CEO and Chair of Trustees. Any areas of concern during the year are followed up and measures implemented to address any issues. The surplus was in no small part also attributable to the school roll at the three schools which continued to be healthy. Abbey currently has 425 pupils on roll and waiting lists in several year groups; Aragon has 567 pupils on roll including 77 in Reception; Glenthorne now has 1,765 pupils on roll with bulge classes in Y7, Y8, Y9 and Y10.

Reserves policy

Trustees consider it prudent to maintain a level of useable reserves sufficient to cover unexpected and unplanned events so that the Trust's primary objective is preserved. Levels of reserves are monitored by the Finance Committee through the management accounts. Trustees have agreed to aim for a reserve of 3% of the school's annual budget, taking into account the cost of one month's salary bill.

The unpredictable variability of the school budget at the moment and increased expenditure on energy and salaries means that schools in the Trust will strive but struggle to achieve a reserve of 3%.

Investment policy and powers

There are no investments held beyond cash deposits retained with the major UK clearing banks. Speculative investments are not permitted.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Trustees hold a Risk Register which is regularly updated to assess the major risks to which the Academy Trust is exposed, in particular those relating to academic performance/finances/child welfare/admissions. The Trustees have implemented a number of systems to assess risks that the Academy Trust faces and have developed policies and procedures to mitigate those risks. 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 principal financial risk faced by the company is that on-going pressure on funding results in a risk that deficits may be experienced. The budgeting and reporting process, including scrutiny by the Trustees of actual financial performance, mitigates the risk.

As the nature of the financial instruments dealt with by the company is relatively simple (bank balances, debtors and "trade" creditors), Trustees consider the associated risk in this area to be minimal.

The costs to schools of the LGPS are likely to rise in the coming three years. The risk resulting from the company's share of the LGPS deficit is managed by following the advice of the scheme's actuaries, specifically as regards the level of contributions payable, ensuring that annual budgets are drawn up to reflect the actuary's advice.

Levels of capital funding are increasingly less certain, our buildings are ageing and some require significant maintenance and repairs, so revenue funding is being identified to address some of these issues.

Trustee skills and knowledge

It is an important priority of the Trust to ensure that all Trustees have sufficient skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively. In addition to CPD and learning from reading and discussing educational and policy documents, the

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

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Trust carries out regular skills audits to ensure that the Trust Board has the full range of skills and knowledge, particularly financial skills, to fulfil their responsibilities. All Trustees are encouraged to engage in CPD relevant to their general and specific role as a Trustee, particularly safeguarding courses.

Our fundraising practices

The trust and individual academies within it organise fundraising events and appeals and co-ordinate the activities of our supporters both in the academies and in the wider community on behalf of the Trust.

The Trust does not use professional fundraisers or involve commercial participators.

The Trust complies with the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice. All fundraising is undertaken by the Trust in a manner that seeks to ensure that it is not unreasonably intrusive or persistent. Contact is made through email, academy newsletters, our websites and via students. All fundraising material contains clear instructions on how a person can be removed from mailing lists.

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting (SECR)

UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period	1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023	1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh)	2,726,261	3,008,049*
<u>Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>		
Gas consumption	314.36	360.51
Owned transport – mini-buses	0.709	0.608
<u>Total scope 1</u>	315.07	361.118
<u>Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>		
Purchased electricity	206.18	213.57
<u>Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>		
Business travel in employee-owned vehicles	0.0013	0.00083
Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e	521.25	574.69
<u>Intensity ratio</u>		
Tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.19	0.22

*Figure revised from previous accounts.

Quantification and Reporting Methodology: -

We have followed the 2019 HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol – Corporate Standard and have used the 2023 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

Intensity measurement

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

Measures taken to improve energy efficiency

We have installed solar panels at Glenthorne High School. The new QEII Wing at Glenthorne makes use of an air-source heat-pump. We have started the Electric Vehicle salary sacrifice scheme for employees across the Trust.

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Plans for future periods

Plans for next year have been detailed above. The long-term vision for the Trust is as follows:

The Willow Learning Trust has a strong ethos and identity and a vision for a Trust of a dozen schools in South/South-West London and bordering counties, secondary and primary, working together closely as equals with collaborative decision-making in a spirit of positive partnership to raise standards in our schools:

- A Trust with a strong ethos of equality, diversity and inclusivity for staff and pupils which values the wellbeing of staff and pupils and supports work-life balance.
- An academic, broad, innovative, challenging, rigorous, creative, engaging curriculum and evidence-based teaching and learning with a rich variety of opportunities for academic, artistic and sporting excellence
- The taught curriculum complemented by extra-curricular activities and enrichment to foster a spirit of aspiration, enjoyment and resilience and develop a sense of identity and community
- Strong pastoral systems characterised by high expectations of behaviour, attitudes and achievement where pupils are known, cared for and supported as individuals, learn to behave with respect for all other members of the school and external community and show courtesy and good manners.
- We aim to empower schools within the Trust by promoting autonomy: we encourage each school to maintain its individual priorities and identity with strong local governance, within a common Trust policy framework and financial, HR and governance structure.
- A Trust with a commitment to school improvement and raising standards and to developing an achievement culture where every individual is supported and challenged to succeed, encouraging high aspirations, ambition and effort as essential cultural values enabling our more able pupils to excel and all pupils to make outstanding progress:
 - Shared teachers, resources and facilities, particularly to support and develop the arts, sport and computer science and SEN expertise and staffing.
 - Secondary subject teachers to provide specialist support to build and broaden skills, knowledge and understanding in Science, MFL, the arts and sport and to aid transition by introducing Primary pupils to additional teachers
 - Collaborative work on the development and improvement of teaching and learning, sharing of best practice and centres of excellence for each school.
 - Shared CPD and joint working on schemes of work as appropriate.
 - Teacher training for Primary and Secondary trainees through the Sutton SCITT.
 - Premises and facilities that are attractive, safe and well maintained
 - Financial efficiencies and improved value for money, as through the Trust we will be able to share staff and reduce costs in administration, reprographics, ICT, insurance, premises, HR, legal and financial areas.

Funds held as Custodian Trustee

The Trust does not hold funds in the capacity of custodian trustee on behalf of any third parties.

Auditor

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

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

The Trustees' Report, incorporating a Strategic Report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees as the company directors, on ...05/12/2023..... and signed on the Board's behalf by:



S Brown
Chair of Trustees

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Scope of responsibility

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

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

Governance

Paragraph 2.3 of the Academy Trust Handbook 2022 sets out that the board and its committees must meet regularly enough to discharge their responsibilities and ensure robust governance and effective management arrangements. The Full Trust Board met 4 times during the year and the Finance, Premises and Audit Committee met 5 times. The Chair of Trustees received the monthly accounts every month over the course of the year and accounts were sent to all Trustees six times.

There were some changes to the Trustees over the year, including the resignation of Jan Wright as a Trustee on 31/08/2022. There were changes to Associate Trustees, too, as Laura Dalton and Mark Rosewell took on the Chair of Governor roles at their respective governing bodies.

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

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
S Brown (Chair)	4	4
T Magill (Vice Chair)	2	4
D Balogun	4	4
S Cook	1	4
L Dalton	4	4
M Holness	4	4
S Hume (CEO)	4	4
I Paget	4	4
M Rosewell	4	4
G Stonell	3	4

The Finance, Premises and Audit (FPA) Committee is a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees. Its primary purpose is to ensure the sound management of the Trust's finance and resources. In addition to setting the budget and three-year budgets for the Trust, the FPA conducted regular monitoring of Trust and school budgets, as prepared by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), received regular reports from the CFO and CEO and reviewed both internal and external audit reports. The Committee also agreed Trust policies for Reserves, Tendering and Whistleblowing. The Committee also has responsibility for GDPR and premises issues, so reviewed GDPR and Premises policies and monitored health and safety and premises issues. The Committee was satisfied with the quality of the financial and benchmarking data it received.

Attendance at meetings during the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
G Stonell (Chair)	4	5
D Balogun	5	5
S Brown	3	5
S Hume	5	5
T Magill	5	5

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Conflict of interest

The Trust manages conflicts of interest by maintaining an up-to-date and complete register of interests and acting on any identified interests and ensuring that tendering and the process for agreement of contracts is done correctly and avoids related-party transactions.

Governance Reviews

The Trust carried out a significant review and consultation on its governance structure in 2021/22, namely its scheme of delegation. All parties were consulted and responsibilities were delegated to Local Governing Bodies to give them greater autonomy. The final scheme of delegation was discussed and agreed by trustees and all governing bodies. It will be reviewed again in one year's time or in the case of a significant change.

Review of Value for Money

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

The Accounting Officer considers how the Trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the Board of Trustees where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data where available. We have made effective use of resources and bids for capital for relevant funding to ensure the trust's estate is safe, well-maintained, and complies with regulations.

We have delivered value for money during the year by:

- Rigorous tracking of pupil progress and attainment at all key stages to ensure interventions and support are provided where most needed in order to achieve the best outcomes.
- Regular reviews of both primary and secondary provision and curriculum to ensure that the curriculum is of high quality and provides extra-curricular and extension activities to enable pupils at all key stages to achieve the highest levels of academic and personal achievement.
- Reviewing the staffing structures in all Trust schools regularly to ensure affordability, capacity at each school and greater focus on key priorities.
- Working closely with other schools in Sutton and Merton and through the Secondary and Primary SCITT on issues such as teacher training and ECT induction.
- Ensuring the quality of teaching continues to be a priority for the Trust with all teachers encouraged to aspire and work towards consistently excellent teaching. Teachers are given clear guidance and effective training on teaching priorities and strategies.
- Maintaining robust financial governance with Trustees regularly monitoring financial management through scrutiny of monthly monitoring reports as well as reports and recommendations from the Chief Financial Officer and internal and external audits.
- Tendering carried out in line with the Trust's Tendering Policy with 2 quotes for expenditure over £1k and 3 quotes for expenditure over £5k.
- Regularly seeking opportunities to generate additional funding.
- Regularly monitoring the progress of building works through site meetings and reports with expenditure considered by Trustees to ensure value for money.
- Participating with other schools and Trusts to buy services through the Local Authority at competitive prices such as insurance and IT network arrangements. The principles of value for money underpin all purchasing decisions throughout the Trust.
- Continuing to centralise Trust services to provide opportunities for economies of scale.

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

The purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of academy trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in The Willow Learning Trust for the period 01 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 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 Trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 01 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.

The risk and control framework

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

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees;
- regular reviews by the Finance Committee 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 considered the need for a specific internal audit function, in addition to our annual external audit, and appointed SBS to perform a range of checks on the academy trust's financial systems. In particular the checks carried out in the current period included:

- testing of payroll systems
- testing of purchasing and procurement systems
- checks on income collection processes and assets, including GAG and non-GAG income
- testing of control account/ bank reconciliations

The internal scrutiny auditor delivered the schedule of work as planned. The audit provided the Trust with full assurance in twelve areas, partial assurance in nine areas and limited assurance in one area.

The external auditor delivered the schedule of work as planned auditing the accounting system, non-grant income, payroll and personnel and purchasing and identified three advisory areas for improvement.

The Finance and Audit Committee reviewed and discussed the audit reports on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the board of Trustees' financial responsibilities. Two areas identified for improvement were expenses and bank reconciliations:

- Ensuring that bank reconciliations and charge card statements are authorised on a monthly basis.
- Reviewing procedures for expenses to ensure that transactions over a certain value have prior approval from the Headteacher or CEO.

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Review of effectiveness

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

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

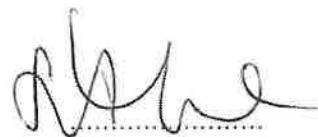
The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the Finance Committee and a plan to ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Approved by order of the Members of the Board of Trustees on 05¹²/2023 and signed on its behalf by:



S Brown

Chair of Trustees



S Hume

Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

As accounting officer of The Willow Learning Trust, I have considered my responsibility to notify the Academy Trust Board of Trustees and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding, including for estates safety and management, under the funding agreement in place between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2022, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

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

S Hume
Accounting Officer



THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

The trustees (who are also the directors of The Willow Learning Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the Financial Statements in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 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:

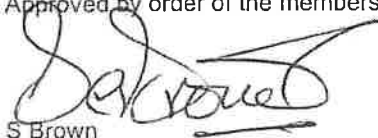
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting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

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

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

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

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on05¹²/2023..... and signed on its behalf by:



S Brown

Chair of Trustees

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Opinion

We have audited the Financial Statements of The Willow Learning Trust for the year ended 31 August 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the Financial Statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 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 charitable company'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;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of Trustees

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the Financial Statements

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

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

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims.
- Enquiry of management to identify any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.
- Reviewing internal assurance reports.
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Auditing the risk of management override of controls, including through testing journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, and evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business.

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

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

Use of our report

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



**Louise Hallsworth FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Baxter & Co**

11 December 2023
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**Chartered Certified Accountants
Statutory Auditor**

Lynwood House
Crofton Road
Orpington
Kent
BR6 8QE

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 18 May 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 The Willow Learning Trust during the period 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 The Willow Learning Trust and ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the The Willow Learning Trust and ESFA those matters we are required to state in a report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than The Willow Learning Trust and ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

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

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of The Willow Learning Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 13 October 2011 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 period 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.

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 payments to staff;
- Review of payments to suppliers and other third parties;
- Review of grant and other income streams;
- Review of some key financial control procedures;
- Discussions with finance staff;
- Consideration of the record maintained by the Accounting Officer of the oversight they have exercised;
- Consideration of the programme of internal scrutiny implemented by the Academy Trust in order to comply with its obligations under 3.1 of the Academy Trust Handbook 2022, issued by the ESFA.

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 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.

Baxter & Co.

Reporting Accountant

Baxter & Co
Lynwood House
Crofton Road
Orpington
Kent
BR6 8QE

Dated: 11 December 2023

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds:		Total 2023	Total 2022
	Notes	£'000	General	Fixed asset	£'000	£'000
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and capital grants	3	-	-	2,385	2,385	2,361
Charitable activities:						
- Funding for educational operations	4	43	18,302	-	18,345	16,842
Other trading activities	5	34	19	-	53	67
Investments	6	18	-	-	18	1
Total		<u>95</u>	<u>18,321</u>	<u>2,385</u>	<u>20,801</u>	<u>19,271</u>
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	7	5	-	-	5	4
Charitable activities:						
- Educational operations	9	322	17,432	1,120	18,874	18,443
Total	7	<u>327</u>	<u>17,432</u>	<u>1,120</u>	<u>18,879</u>	<u>18,447</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		(232)	889	1,265	1,922	824
Transfers between funds	20	-	(374)	374	-	-
Other recognised gains/(losses)						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	22	-	3,366	-	3,366	8,813
Net movement in funds		(232)	3,881	1,639	5,288	9,637
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		364	(1,846)	58,385	56,903	47,266
Total funds carried forward		<u>132</u>	<u>2,035</u>	<u>60,024</u>	<u>62,191</u>	<u>56,903</u>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Comparative year information Year ended 31 August 2022	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted funds:		Total
		funds	General	Fixed asset	2022
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and capital grants	3	-	-	2,361	2,361
Charitable activities:					
- Funding for educational operations	4	115	16,727	-	16,842
Other trading activities	5	39	28	-	67
Investments	6	1	-	-	1
Total		<u>155</u>	<u>16,755</u>	<u>2,361</u>	<u>19,271</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7	4	-	-	4
Charitable activities:					
- Educational operations	9	115	17,346	982	18,443
Total	7	<u>119</u>	<u>17,346</u>	<u>982</u>	<u>18,447</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		36	(591)	1,379	824
Transfers between funds	20	-	(118)	118	-
Other recognised gains/(losses)					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	22	-	8,813	-	8,813
Net movement in funds		36	8,104	1,497	9,637
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		328	(9,950)	56,888	47,266
Total funds carried forward		<u>364</u>	<u>(1,846)</u>	<u>58,385</u>	<u>56,903</u>

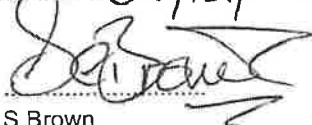
THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

	Notes	2023		2022	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	13		26		-
Tangible assets	14		59,197		56,674
			<u>59,223</u>		<u>56,674</u>
Current assets					
Stock	15	8		11	
Debtors	16	1,669		2,684	
Cash at bank and in hand		3,541		2,886	
		<u>5,218</u>		<u>5,581</u>	
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(2,037)		(2,097)	
Net current assets			<u>3,181</u>		<u>3,484</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>62,404</u>		<u>60,158</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	18		-		(1)
Net assets excluding pension liability			<u>62,404</u>		<u>60,157</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	22		(213)		(3,254)
Total net assets			<u><u>62,191</u></u>		<u><u>56,903</u></u>
Funds of the Academy Trust:					
Restricted funds	20				
- Fixed asset funds			60,024		58,385
- Restricted income funds			2,248		1,408
- Pension reserve			(213)		(3,254)
Total restricted funds			<u>62,059</u>		<u>56,539</u>
Unrestricted income funds	20		<u>132</u>		<u>364</u>
Total funds			<u><u>62,191</u></u>		<u><u>56,903</u></u>

The Financial Statements on pages 29 to 56 were approved by the Trustees and authorised for issue on 05/12/2023 and are signed on their behalf by:



S Brown
Chair of Trustees

Company registration number 07635098 (England and Wales)

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

		2023		2022	
	Notes	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cash flows from operating activities					
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	23		1,924		(1,068)
Cash flows from investing activities					
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		18		1	
Capital grants from DfE Group		2,301		198	
Capital funding received from sponsors and others		84		2,163	
Purchase of intangible fixed assets		(32)		-	
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(3,637)		(927)	
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities			(1,266)		1,435
Cash flows from financing activities					
Repayment of other loan		(3)		(11)	
Net cash used in financing activities			(3)		(11)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period			655		356
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year			2,886		2,530
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year			<u>3,541</u>		<u>2,886</u>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

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), judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty, is set out below.

1.1 Basis of preparation

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

1.2 Going concern

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

1.3 Income

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

Grants

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

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

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

Donations

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

Other income

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

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.4 Expenditure

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

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Expenditure on raising funds

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

Charitable activities

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

1.5 Intangible fixed assets and amortisation

Intangible assets costing £5,000 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment.

Amortisation is provided on intangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset on a straight-line basis over its expected useful life, as follows:

- Purchased computer software - 5 years

1.6 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Assets costing £5,000 or more per item (or less if they form part of a larger purchase or project where the total cost exceeds £25,000) are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

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

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

Freehold land and buildings	2%
Leasehold land and buildings	2%
Plant and machinery	10%
Computer equipment	33.33%
Motor vehicles	20%

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

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.

1.7 Liabilities

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

1.8 Leased assets

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

1.9 Financial instruments

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

Financial assets

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

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

Financial liabilities

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

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

1.10 Stock

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Net realisable value is based on estimated selling price less further costs to completion and disposal. Provision is made for obsolete and slow moving stock.

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

1.12 Pensions benefits

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

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

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

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

1.13 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 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.

1.14 Agency arrangements

Where the Academy Trust acts as agent in collecting and / or distributing from the ESFA or others, and subsequent disbursements are excluded from the Statement of Financial Activities as the Trust does not have control over charitable application of the funds. The funds received and paid, and any balances held are disclosed in note 29.

2 Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

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

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

2 Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

(Continued)

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 22, will impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore, a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2019 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.

Critical areas of judgement

In preparing these Financial Statements, the Trustees have not needed to exercise any subjective judgements that would be critical to the Academy Trust's Financial Statements.

3 Donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Capital grants	-	2,301	2,301	198
LA capital grants	-	84	84	2,163
	<u>-</u>	<u>2,385</u>	<u>2,385</u>	<u>2,361</u>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

4 Funding for the Academy Trust's educational operations

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
DfE/ESFA grants				
General annual grant (GAG)	-	14,438	14,438	13,687
Other DfE/ESFA grants:				
- UIFSM	-	110	110	125
- Pupil premium	-	569	569	536
- Others	-	886	886	615
	<u>-</u>	<u>16,003</u>	<u>16,003</u>	<u>14,963</u>
Other government grants				
Local authority grants	-	1,032	1,032	979
Special educational projects	-	186	186	198
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,218</u>	<u>1,218</u>	<u>1,177</u>
COVID-19 additional funding				
DfE/ESFA				
Other DfE/ESFA COVID-19 funding	-	181	181	66
Non-DfE/ESFA				
Other COVID-19 funding	-	-	-	30
	<u>-</u>	<u>181</u>	<u>181</u>	<u>96</u>
Other funding				
Catering income	43	-	43	115
Trips income	-	374	374	75
Other incoming resources	-	526	526	416
	<u>43</u>	<u>900</u>	<u>943</u>	<u>606</u>
Total funding	<u>43</u>	<u>18,302</u>	<u>18,345</u>	<u>16,842</u>

The Academy Trust has been eligible to claim additional funding in the year from government support schemes in response to the Coronavirus outbreak. The funding received is shown above under "COVID-19 additional funding". The funding received for coronavirus exceptional support covers £181k of Recovery Premium funding and National Tutoring programme funding staff and other costs. These costs are included in notes 7 and 9 below as appropriate.

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

7 Expenditure (Continued)

Included within expenditure are the following transactions:

	Total	Individual items over £5,000
	2023	2023
	£	£
Gifts made by the Academy Trust - total	389	—

Clarification - While the majority of disclosure in these accounts are rounded to £'000, disclosure of gifts made are not. The value of gifts made for the year was £389 (and not £389k).

8 Central services

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

- human resources;
- data protection;
- clerking;
- financial services;
- legal services;
- IT services.

The Academy Trust charges for these services on the following basis:

- flat percentage of income (5% of GAG)

The amounts charged during the year were as follows:	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Abbey Primary School	108	102
Glenthorne High School	525	473
Aragon Primary School	133	125
	<u>766</u>	<u>700</u>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

9 Charitable activities	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Direct costs				
Educational operations	-	14,444	14,444	13,176
Support costs				
Educational operations	322	4,108	4,430	5,267
	<u>322</u>	<u>18,552</u>	<u>18,874</u>	<u>18,443</u>
Analysis of costs			2023	2022
			£'000	£'000
Direct costs				
Teaching and educational support staff costs			12,520	11,619
Staff development			30	26
Depreciation and amortisation			896	784
Technology costs			27	71
Educational supplies and services			188	162
Examination fees			99	148
Educational consultancy			243	232
Other direct costs			441	134
			<u>14,444</u>	<u>13,176</u>
Support costs				
Support staff costs			1,698	1,654
Defined benefit pension scheme - staff costs (FRS102 adjustment)			188	1,104
Depreciation and amortisation			224	198
Technology costs			97	130
Maintenance of premises and equipment			348	341
Cleaning			350	329
Energy costs			358	239
Rent, rates and other occupancy costs			144	143
Insurance			54	50
Security and transport			9	18
Catering			403	469
Defined benefit pension scheme - finance costs (FRS102 adjustment)			137	183
Legal costs			11	13
Other support costs			374	351
Governance costs			35	45
			<u>4,430</u>	<u>5,267</u>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

10 Staff

Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Wages and salaries	10,636	9,915
Social security costs	1,115	1,020
Pension costs	2,412	2,212
Defined benefit pension scheme - staff costs (FRS102 adjustment)	188	1,104
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Staff costs - employees	14,351	14,251
Agency staff costs	60	109
Staff restructuring costs	-	21
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total staff expenditure	14,411	14,381
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Staff restructuring costs comprise:

Severance payments	-	21
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Staff numbers

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

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Teachers	149	150
Administration and support	140	154
Management	15	16
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	304	320
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

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

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Teachers	142	145
Administration and support	116	100
Management	15	13
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	273	258
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

10 Staff

(Continued)

Higher paid staff

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

	2023 Number	2022 Number
£60,000 - £70,000	4	5
£70,001 - £80,000	4	5
£80,001 - £90,000	3	1
£100,001 - £110,000	-	1
£110,001 - £120,000	1	1
£120,001 - £130,000	1	-

Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Academy Trust comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of key management personnel benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy Trust was £930,430 (2022: £959,026).

11 Trustees' remuneration and expenses

One or more of the Trustees has been paid remuneration or has received other benefits from an employment with the Academy Trust. The CEO and other Staff Trustees only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of CEO and staff members under their contracts of employment, and not in respect of their services as Trustees.

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

S Hume (CEO):

- Remuneration £120,000 - £125,000 (2022: £115,000 - £120,000)
- Employer's pension contributions £15,000 - £20,000 (2022: £5,000 - £10,000)

During the year ended 31 August 2023, expenses totalling £nil (2022: £915) were reimbursed to no Trustees (2022: 5 Trustees).

Other related party transactions involving the Trustees are set out within the related parties note.

12 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 £10,000,000 on any one claim and the cost for the year ended 31 August 2023 is included in the total insurance cost.

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

13 Intangible fixed assets

	Computer software £'000
Cost	
At 1 September 2022	20
Additions	32
	<hr/>
At 31 August 2023	52
	<hr/>
Amortisation	
At 1 September 2022	20
Charge for year	6
	<hr/>
At 31 August 2023	26
	<hr/>
Carrying amount	
At 31 August 2023	26
	<hr/> <hr/>
At 31 August 2022	-
	<hr/> <hr/>

14 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings £'000	Leasehold land and buildings £'000	Plant and machinery £'000	Computer equipment £'000	Motor vehicles £'000	Total £'000
Cost						
At 1 September 2022	31,700	30,341	792	351	25	63,209
Additions	2,292	1,060	37	248	-	3,637
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 August 2023	33,992	31,401	829	599	25	66,846
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Depreciation						
At 1 September 2022	4,208	1,639	393	270	25	6,535
Charge for the year	538	371	83	122	-	1,114
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 August 2023	4,746	2,010	476	392	25	7,649
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net book value						
At 31 August 2023	29,246	29,391	353	207	-	59,197
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
At 31 August 2022	27,492	28,702	399	81	-	56,674
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Freehold land and buildings relate to Glenthorne High School, and the leasehold land and buildings relate to Aragon Primary School and Abbey Primary School. Freehold land is included above at a net book value of £6,320k and leasehold land is included above at a net book value of £16,494k.

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

15	Stock	2023	2022
		£'000	£'000
	Other stock	8	11
		<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>
16	Debtors	2023	2022
		£'000	£'000
	Trade debtors	10	50
	VAT recoverable	301	289
	Prepayments and accrued income	1,358	2,345
		<u>1,669</u>	<u>2,684</u>
		<u>1,669</u>	<u>2,684</u>
17	Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2023	2022
		£'000	£'000
	Government loans	1	3
	Trade creditors	304	684
	Other taxation and social security	299	263
	Other creditors	744	793
	Accruals and deferred income	689	354
		<u>2,037</u>	<u>2,097</u>
		<u>2,037</u>	<u>2,097</u>
18	Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	2023	2022
		£'000	£'000
	Government loans	-	1
		<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
		<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

18 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(Continued)	
Analysis of loans	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Wholly repayable within five years	1	4
Less: included in current liabilities	(1)	(3)
Amounts included above	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
Loan maturity		
Debt due in one year or less	1	3
Due in more than one year but not more than two years	-	1
	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>

During the year ended 31 August 2016 the Academy Trust entered into an interest free loan with 'Salix Finance', repayable in equal half yearly instalments over an 8 year period.

19 Deferred income	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Deferred income is included within:		
Creditors due within one year	<u>100</u>	<u>171</u>
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	171	701
Released from previous years	(171)	(701)
Resources deferred in the year	<u>100</u>	<u>171</u>
Deferred income at 31 August 2023	<u>100</u>	<u>171</u>

Deferred income at 31 August 2023 comprised UIFSM funding received in advance £67k (2022: £74k), trip income received in advance of £33k (2022; £44k) and rates received in advance of £nil (2022: £53k).

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

20 Funds

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2023 £'000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,394	14,438	(13,231)	(374)	2,227
UIFSM	-	110	(110)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	569	(569)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA COVID-19 funding	-	181	(181)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	886	(886)	-	-
Other government grants	-	1,218	(1,218)	-	-
Other restricted funds	14	919	(912)	-	21
Pension reserve	(3,254)	-	(325)	3,366	(213)
	<u>(1,846)</u>	<u>18,321</u>	<u>(17,432)</u>	<u>2,992</u>	<u>2,035</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Inherited on conversion	47,203	-	(676)	-	46,527
DfE group capital grants	5,580	2,301	(200)	-	7,681
Capital expenditure from GAG and other funds	1,952	-	(170)	397	2,179
LA capital	3,650	84	(74)	(23)	3,637
	<u>58,385</u>	<u>2,385</u>	<u>(1,120)</u>	<u>374</u>	<u>60,024</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>56,539</u>	<u>20,706</u>	<u>(18,552)</u>	<u>3,366</u>	<u>62,059</u>
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	<u>364</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>(327)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>132</u>
Total funds	<u>56,903</u>	<u>20,801</u>	<u>(18,879)</u>	<u>3,366</u>	<u>62,191</u>

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

The Restricted General Funds are used to fund the general operating costs of the Academy.

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

The Restricted LGPS Fund represents the Academy's share of the LGPS Pension Fund deficit.

The Restricted Fixed Asset Fund represents investment in fixed assets, net of related depreciation. Unspent capital grants are also held in this fund, net of any related loans and their use is restricted to the capital projects for which the grant was paid.

Unrestricted Funds represent balances held at period end that can be applied at the discretion of the Governors, to support any of the Academy's charitable purposes.

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

20 Funds

(Continued)

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

	Balance at 1 September 2021 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2022 £'000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	680	13,687	(12,855)	(118)	1,394
UIFSM	-	125	(125)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	536	(536)	-	-
Catch-up premium	52	-	(52)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA COVID-19 funding	-	66	(66)	-	-
Other Coronavirus funding	-	30	(30)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	22	615	(637)	-	-
Other government grants	-	1,177	(1,177)	-	-
Other restricted funds	76	519	(581)	-	14
Pension reserve	(10,780)	-	(1,287)	8,813	(3,254)
	<u>(9,950)</u>	<u>16,755</u>	<u>(17,346)</u>	<u>8,695</u>	<u>(1,846)</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Inherited on conversion	47,861	-	(676)	18	47,203
DfE group capital grants	5,555	198	(173)	-	5,580
Capital expenditure from GAG and other funds	1,953	-	(101)	100	1,952
LA capital	1,519	2,163	(32)	-	3,650
	<u>56,888</u>	<u>2,361</u>	<u>(982)</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>58,385</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>46,938</u>	<u>19,116</u>	<u>(18,328)</u>	<u>8,813</u>	<u>56,539</u>
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	328	155	(119)	-	364
	<u>328</u>	<u>155</u>	<u>(119)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>364</u>
Total funds	<u>47,266</u>	<u>19,271</u>	<u>(18,447)</u>	<u>8,813</u>	<u>56,903</u>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

20 Funds (Continued)

Total funds analysis by academy

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
Fund balances at 31 August 2023 were allocated as follows:		
Abbey Primary School	356	277
Glenthorne High School	1,653	905
Aragon Primary School	366	557
Central services	5	33
	<u>2,380</u>	<u>1,772</u>
Total before fixed assets fund and pension reserve	2,380	1,772
Restricted fixed asset fund	60,024	58,385
Pension reserve	(213)	(3,254)
	<u>62,191</u>	<u>56,903</u>

Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching and educational support staff	Other support staff costs	Educational supplies	Other costs excluding depreciation	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Abbey Primary School	1,793	178	43	539	2,553	2,554
Glenthorne High School	8,008	1,013	96	1,801	10,918	10,781
Aragon Primary School	2,519	268	49	623	3,459	3,405
Central services	200	432	-	197	829	725
	<u>12,520</u>	<u>1,891</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>3,160</u>	<u>17,759</u>	<u>17,465</u>

21 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted funds: General £'000	Fixed asset £'000	Total Funds £'000
Fund balances at 31 August 2023 are represented by:				
Intangible fixed assets	-	-	26	26
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	59,197	59,197
Current assets	132	4,285	801	5,218
Current liabilities	-	(2,037)	-	(2,037)
Pension scheme liability	-	(213)	-	(213)
	<u>132</u>	<u>2,035</u>	<u>60,024</u>	<u>62,191</u>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

21 Analysis of net assets between funds

(Continued)

	Unrestricted	Restricted funds:		Total
	Funds	General	Fixed asset	Funds
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fund balances at 31 August 2022 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	56,674	56,674
Current assets	364	3,502	1,715	5,581
Current liabilities	-	(2,094)	(3)	(2,097)
Non-current liabilities	-	-	(1)	(1)
Pension scheme liability	-	(3,254)	-	(3,254)
Total net assets	364	(1,846)	58,385	56,903

22 Pension and similar obligations

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

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

Contributions amounting to £281k were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2023 (2022: £251k) and are included within creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

Introduction

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

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

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 WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

22 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

- employer contribution rates set at 23.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% employer 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. The 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 the TPS in the period amounted to £1,713k (2022: £1,612k).

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

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

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contributions are as noted below. The agreed contribution rates for future years are 20.5% to 24.4% for employers and 5.5% to 12.5% for employees.

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

Total contributions made	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
Employer's contributions	696	606
Employees' contributions	199	162
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total contributions	895	768
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Principal actuarial assumptions	2023	2022
	%	%
Rate of increase in salaries	2.95 to 3.90	3.95 to 4.05
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.90 to 3.00	2.95 to 3.05
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.20 to 5.30	4.25
CPI increases	2.90 to 3.00	2.95 to 3.05
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

22 Pension and similar obligations

(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	20.70 to 22.10	21.00 to 21.40
- Females	23.20 to 24.80	23.50 to 24.10
Retiring in 20 years		
- Males	22.00 to 23.00	22.30 to 22.90
- Females	24.60 to 26.00	24.90 to 25.80

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

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Discount rate + 0.1%	10,682	12,784
Discount rate - 0.1%	11,161	13,344
Mortality assumption + 1 year	11,323	13,579
Mortality assumption - 1 year	10,520	12,577
Salary rate + 0.1%	10,940	13,117
Salary rate - 0.1%	10,902	13,037
Pensions rate + 0.1%	11,148	13,333
Pensions rate - 0.1%	10,695	12,874

Defined benefit pension scheme net liability

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Scheme assets	10,708	9,823
Scheme obligations	(10,921)	(13,077)
Net liability	(213)	(3,254)

The Academy Trust's share of the assets in the scheme

	2023 Fair value £'000	2022 Fair value £'000
Equities	5,693	5,750
Other bonds	1,688	1,800
Gilts	133	187
Cash	1,490	440
Property	1,026	1,020
Other assets	678	626
Total market value of assets	10,708	9,823

The actual return on scheme assets was £184,000 (2022: £(876,000)).

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

22 Pension and similar obligations	(Continued)	
Amount recognised in the statement of financial activities	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
Current service cost	882	1,708
Interest income	(432)	(170)
Interest cost	569	353
Administration expenses	2	2
Total operating charge	<u>1,021</u>	<u>1,893</u>
Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations		2023
		£'000
At 1 September 2022		13,077
Current service cost		882
Interest cost		569
Employee contributions		199
Actuarial (gain)		(3,614)
Benefits paid		(192)
At 31 August 2023		<u>10,921</u>
Changes in the fair value of the Academy Trust's share of scheme assets		2023
		£'000
At 1 September 2022		9,823
Interest income		432
Actuarial (loss)		(248)
Employer contributions		696
Employee contributions		199
Benefits paid		(192)
Administration expenses		(2)
At 31 August 2023		<u>10,708</u>

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

23 Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	Notes	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Net income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)		1,922	824
Adjusted for:			
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income		(2,385)	(2,361)
Investment income receivable	6	(18)	(1)
Defined benefit pension costs less contributions payable	22	188	1,104
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost	22	137	183
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets		1,114	978
Amortisation of intangible fixed assets	13	6	4
Decrease/(increase) in stocks		3	(2)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors		1,015	(1,697)
(Decrease) in creditors		(58)	(100)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		1,924	(1,068)

24 Analysis of changes in net funds

	1 September 2022 £'000	Cash flows £'000	31 August 2023 £'000
Cash	2,886	655	3,541
Loans falling due within one year	(3)	2	(1)
Loans falling due after more than one year	(1)	1	-
	2,882	658	3,540

25 Long-term commitments

Operating leases

At 31 August 2023 the total of the Academy Trust's future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases was:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Amounts due within one year	33	28
Amounts due in two and five years	85	5
	118	33

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

26	Capital commitments	2023	2022
		£'000	£'000
	Expenditure contracted for but not provided in the Financial Statements	956	1,864

At 31 August 2023, the Trust was committed to completing the following projects:

- Abbey Primary School: a Fire project, funded by CIF and reserves with total expected costs of £1,043k. Costs of £815k were incurred during the year, with anticipated costs to completion as at 31 August 2023 of £228k.
- Glenthorne High School: a Fire doors project, funded by CIF and reserves with total expected costs of £1,219k. Costs of £810k were incurred during the year, with anticipated costs to completion as at 31 August 2023 of £409k.
- Glenthorne High School: a bulge class expansion project, funded by the LA and reserves with total expected costs of £2,260k. Costs of £1,941k were incurred, with anticipated costs to completion as at 31 August 2023 of £319k.

27 Related party transactions

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

C Stonell, a relative of G Stonell, a Trustee, is employed by the Academy Trust. C Stonell's appointment was made in open competition and G Stonell was not involved in the decision making process regarding appointment. C Stonell is paid within the normal pay scale for their role and receives no special treatment as a result of their relationship to a Trustee.

L Brown, a relative of S Brown, a Trustee, is employed by the Academy Trust. L Brown's appointment was made in open competition and S Brown was not involved in the decision making process regarding appointment. L Brown is paid within the normal pay scale for their role and receives no special treatment as a result of their relationship to a Trustee.

W Goodall, a relative of J Goodall, the former Director of Finance (resigned July 23), is employed by the Academy Trust. W Goodall's appointment was made in open competition and J Goodall was not involved in the decision making process regarding appointment. W Goodall is paid within the normal pay scale for their role and receives no special treatment as a result of their relationship to the former Director of Finance.

In entering into the above transactions, the Academy Trust has complied with the requirements of ESFA's Academies Trust Handbook 2022.

28 Members' liability

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

THE WILLOW LEARNING TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

29 Agency arrangements

The Academy Trust distributes 16-19 bursary funds to students as an agent for the ESFA. In the accounting period ending 31 August 2023, £38k (2022: £47k) was brought forward from last year, the grant received this year was £7k (2022: £15k), of which £10k was disbursed (2022: £24k). The unspent balance at 31 August 2023 was £35k (2022: £38k) and is included within creditors: amounts falling due within one year.

The Academy Trust also distributes SCITT funds to member academies as an agent for the Department for Education (DfE). In the accounting period ending 31 August 2023, £503k (2022: £597k) was brought forward from last year, the income was £603k (2022: £709k) of which £677k (2022: £803k) was disbursed. The unspent balance at 31 August 2023 was £429k (2022: £503k) and is included within creditors: amounts falling due within one year.