

Sussex Learning Trust

(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended 31 August 2024

**Company Registration Number:
07705100 (England and Wales)**

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

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Reference and Administrative details

Members

R Clark (Appointed 30/3/23)	R Stoneley
J Thompson (Appointed 21/2/24)	S Watt
S Carter (Resigned 27/9/23)	

Trustees / Directors registered at Companies House

J Ash-Edwards (Chair)	P Potter
J Allik	S Robertson
J Gray	K Russ (appointed 17/7/24)
E Gunter	R Stevens
H Hill	J Thompson (resigned 31/12/23)
P Hiscock	S Veluswamy
	N Waters (appointed 7/6/24)

Senior Executive Team

CEO & Accounting Officer	J Morris
Deputy CEO	S Davis
CFO & Company Secretary	J Howard
Chief Estates Development Officer	J Hickey
HR Director	J Keylock

Senior Management Team – Warden Park Secondary Academy

Headteacher	D Wynne Willson
Deputy Headteacher	K Fitzgerald
Deputy Headteacher	N Simmons
Deputy Headteacher	M Sorrell

Senior Management Team – Warden Park Primary Academy

Headteacher	E Brodie
Deputy Headteacher	A Baxter

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Reference and Administrative details

Senior Management Team – Northlands Wood Primary Academy

Headteacher	M Sears
Deputy Headteacher	P Johnson

Senior Management Team – Woodgate Primary Academy

Headteacher	S Neller
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Senior Management Team - Chichester Free School

Executive Principal	L New
Head of Primary	J Garner
Head of Secondary	B Phillips

Senior Management Team - Billingshurst Primary Academy

Headteacher	M Ley
Deputy Headteacher	D Timmins

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Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Reference and Administrative details (continued)

Principal and Registered Office	Broad Street Cuckfield Haywards Heath West Sussex RH17 5DP
Company Registration Number	07705100 (England and Wales)
Independent Auditor	Crowe U.K. LLP Medway Bridge House 1-8 Fairmeadow Maidstone Kent ME14 1JP
Bankers	HSBC Bank Plc 38-40 South Road Haywards Heath West Sussex RH16 4LU
Solicitors	Browne Jacobson LLP 15th Floor 6 Bevis Marks London EC3A 7BA

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Trustees' report

The trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the year ended 31 August 2024. The annual report serves the purposes of both a trustees' report, and a directors' report under company law.

Sussex Learning Trust operates four primary academies and one secondary academy in Mid Sussex, plus one 'all-through' school in Chichester. The pupil capacity and number of students on roll as per the January 2024 census is detailed in the table below.

Academy	Pupil capacity	Number on roll (Jan 24)
Warden Park School	1500**	1520
Warden Park Primary Academy (Year R to 6)	420	413
Warden Park Primary Academy nursery	32*	43
Northlands Wood Primary Academy	420	415
Woodgate Primary Academy (Year R to 6)	105	105
Woodgate Primary Academy nursery	24*	29
Chichester Free School	1020**	1058
Billingshurst Primary Academy	630	Joined trust post Jan 24

* Per session

** These academies have taken additional pupil numbers with the agreement of the Local Authority in response to local need

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

Sussex Learning Trust (referred to herein as the "Trust") is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. It was established on 14 July 2011. Warden Park Secondary Academy (WPSA) converted to academy status on 1 September 2011 and Heyworth Primary School joined the Trust on 1 January 2012 changing its name on conversion to Warden Park Primary Academy (WPPA). Northlands Wood Community Primary School joined the Trust on 1 May 2017 changing its name on conversion to Northlands Wood Primary Academy (NWPA). On the 1 June 2023, Woodgate Primary Schools joined the Trust changing its name on conversion to Woodgate Primary Academy. On 1 September 2023, Chichester Free School joined the Trust having previously been part of Sussex Education Trust (a single academy trust). On 1 June 2024, Billingshurst Primary School joined the Trust changing its name on conversion to Billingshurst Primary Academy.

The Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents of the Academy Trust. The Trust Articles of Association were last updated in 2016. The trustees of Sussex Learning Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company is known as Sussex Learning Trust (SLT). This governance structure for the Trust is shown on page 1 of this report. Details of the trustees who served throughout the year except as noted are included in the Governance Statement.

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Trustees' report (continued)

Trustees are appointed by the members with representation from the governing bodies of individual member academies. The articles of association also permit a member appointed trustee to appoint a co-opted trustee.

Members' Liability

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

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the Trust are to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum.

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

Trustees are appointed by the members or co-opted by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Trust's Articles of Association, having regard to the approved role description for trustees. Any vacancies are openly advertised and consideration is given to the skills mix of the Board of Trustees.

The formal requirement for parental representation is met by the presence of elected parent governors on each Local Governing Body, although there are current parents of children at Trust academies serving as trustees.

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

New trustees are inducted into the workings of the Trust at briefing sessions held with the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. These sessions cover both educational and business matters. Trustees are issued with appropriate background material and are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Trustees are encouraged to attend both internal and external training sessions organised for the education sector. Governance resources are available to the Trust through subscriptions to the National Governance Association and Governor Hub provided by The Key for School Leaders.

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Trustees' report (continued)

Organisational Structure

The Trust structure is made up of 5 members who appoint the trust board, comprising up to 11 member-appointed trustees. The trust board may co-opt additional trustees. Currently there is one member vacancy which is being advertised. The trust board appoints its sub-committees (where required) and Local Governing Bodies for each academy. A scheme of delegation sets out the specific roles and responsibilities of the trust board, sub committees and Local Governing Bodies.

The trustees have overall responsibility and ultimate decision making authority for all the work of the Trust, including the establishment and running of academies. The responsibilities of the trustees are set out in the Scheme of Delegation with due adherence to the Articles of Association.

In order to discharge these responsibilities, the trustees appoint people who are locally based to serve on the Local Governing Body (LGB) which has been established to ensure the good governance of each academy. Each LGB is formally a committee of the trustees. The role of the LGB is an important one. LGBs carry out their functions on behalf of the trustees and in accordance with the Trust's policies. The Trust wishes to avoid the duplication of governance and for decisions to be made as close to the impact of decision making as possible. The Trust therefore wishes LGBs to have considerable autonomy to act in the best interests of their academy, within the framework and support provided by the Trust.

The trustees appoint a Chief Executive Officer (Accounting Officer), a Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief People Officer (CPO) and Chief Estates Development Officer (CEDO). The CEO and DCEO line manage all the academy Headteachers on behalf of the LGBs and trustees ensuring all statutory duties are executed and standards are high and improving. The Trust bases its work on close collaboration between the academies in a spirit of working partnership. The Trust Officers are responsible for furthering this aim. The CEO is charged by the trustees to ensure that the Trust fulfils its responsibilities to the region via liaison with the Regional Schools Commissioner. The CEO is also responsible for project managing any new schools joining the Trust or Free Schools being established under the auspices of the Trust.

The Scheme of Delegation and Articles of Association are available on the Trust website and on request.

The CEO and DCEO are appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the Academy Trust in consultation with the Headteachers of the Academies. In order to facilitate effective operations, the CEO, CFO, CPO and CEDO have delegated authority within the terms approved by the trustees for operational matters including educational, finance, estates and employment matters.

Sussex Learning Trust

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Trustees' report (continued)

Organisational Structure (continued)

The pay and remuneration of key management personnel is set in accordance with the Academy Trust's appraisal and pay policy. The salary range for all staff paid on the leadership spine will take into consideration the provisions of the STPCD together with any broader responsibilities that may be attached to the role. The CEO is responsible for the appraisal and pay awards for key management personnel subject to Trustee review and approval. The remuneration and performance management of the CEO is led by a panel of trustees.

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

The Trust continues to have several successful partnerships with a number of local primary schools where it provided some areas of specialist curriculum support.

The Trust has also worked successfully with other schools through the Haywards Heath schools' locality network. The Trust continues to play an active role in the Bentswood Community Partnership (BCP).

These partnerships have enabled the Trust to not only support education for other schools in the Haywards Heath area, but have also brought benefits to the education of the young people at our academies. For example, students at the secondary academy have had many opportunities to develop their leadership and team-building skills through their work with pupils in the primary schools.

The CEO of the Trust is a National Leader of Education (NLE) and other senior staff are experienced in delivering school improvement work for both the DfE and the Local Authority. This has brought a wide range of CPD opportunities for the CEO and wider staff in addition to the related revenue generating opportunities for the Trust. The work of an NLE challenges the holder to find ways to support school improvement elsewhere but naturally encourages and stimulates initiatives that benefit the host school. The designation also attracts other schools to consider joining the Trust which naturally brings cost saving and other educational collaborative benefits.

S172(1) Statement

The directors act in good faith in making decisions from which the expected outcomes are considered to be most likely to promote the success of the Trust for the benefit of its pupils. In performing their duties, the directors make good faith assessments of the potential consequence on various stakeholders of any decisions that are made.

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Trustees' report (continued)

In this, the directors have a regard to the following:

- the likely consequences of any decision in the long term
- the interests of the trust's employees
- the need to foster the trust's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others
- 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 as between members of the trust

Engagement with employees (including disabled persons)

Employees have been consulted on issues of concern to them by means of regular staff meetings and briefings and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by management. The Trust carries out exit interviews for staff leaving the organisation and has adopted a procedure of upward feedback for leadership.

The establishment of the Executive Team allows the view of each school within the trust to be considered as a collective and provides communication channels with the Trust Officers and also Trustees.

The Trust has implemented a number of detailed policies in relation to all aspects of personnel matters including:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (including Equality Duty)

Grievance Policy

Health & Safety Policy

In accordance with the Trust's Equality Statement and Objectives, the Trust has long established fair employment practices in the recruitment, selection, retention and training of disabled staff.

Full details of these policies are available from the Trust's offices.

Engagement with suppliers, customers and other business relationships

A core value of the trust is an adherence to paying all suppliers within agreed terms.

The directors commit to maximising the resources used in servicing the needs of its pupils to the highest possible standard. In addition to this full engagement with parents, guardians and the local communities is a key aim of the Trust with the view to building successful, long term relationships.

Both the directors and the Key Management Personnel work closely and collaboratively with the Local Authorities to ensure that there is a shared strategy that is mutually beneficial to all parties. Similarly, directors and Key Management work hard to establish and maintain good relationships with the Regional Schools Commissioner, the DfE and the ESFA.

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Trustees' report (continued)

Director indemnities

During the year, an indemnity from the Charitable Company was available to the Directors to insure against liabilities that might be incurred by them in defending proceedings against them in respect of the affairs of the Trust. The indemnity is subject to the provisions of the Companies Act and is set out in the Articles of Association. Cover is provided through the Risk Protection Arrangement.

Objects and Aims

The Trust's mission:

- To promote and support the best interests of children in the communities it serves
- To advance education for the public benefit
- To exercise civic duties and responsibilities for the wider good of the local community

Sussex Learning Trust academies work collaboratively to provide 'world class' formational and transformational opportunities helping our young people realise their potential and equipping them in their journey towards personal fulfilment and responsible citizenship.

Our values (and related Nolan Principle)

Respect (objectivity & selflessness)

Integrity (objectivity & accountability & honesty)

Resilience & Perseverance (leadership)

Kindness (selflessness & openness)

Confidence (Leadership)

Optimism (leadership)

Public Benefit

The trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England & Wales. Trustees have referred to the guidance in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Academy Trust's objectives and aims and in planning future activities for the year. Trustees consider that the Academy Trust's aims are demonstrably to benefit the public, as the academies within the Trust meet the educational needs of young people living in the areas appropriately designated by the Local Authority and the needs of other young people who meet the agreed admission criteria should further places be available.

The Academy Trust has strengthened its links with other local schools through the Haywards Heath schools' locality network. The CEO, as an NLE, is a systems leader supporting many schools in West Sussex to improve.

Trustees' report (continued)

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

Core Purpose Strategic Objectives and Organisation Goals

1. Outcomes and collaboration

- a) Meet (or show trends towards) top 5% performance indicators across all (most) academies, especially for disadvantaged learners.
- b) Further embed our culture of quality control & best practice & collaboration across all academies.
- c) Advance language knowledge & skills for all learners
- d) To be a beacon of excellence for digital learning
- e) To be a centre of excellence for Character Education.
- f) Cross-phase CPD and/or projects happening monthly

2. Sustainable and strategic growth

- a) Enact our 'Growth Strategy
- b) Enhance financial, operational & technical infrastructure to complement sustainable growth
- c) Plan for leadership succession
- d) Review the SLT 'way' – a template for cross-phase schooling
- e) Actively seek opportunities to bid for new free-schools that can enhance our vision of collaborative best practices
- f) High quality digital platforms and video materials that demonstrate the strengths and benefits of joining SLT

3. SLT people & community

- a) Maintain & develop our individual academy reputations so that we remain oversubscribed with 'first-choice' learners
- b) Ensure we are fully-staffed with outstanding candidates
- c) Recognised as a responsible and important stakeholder in the success of the locality economy and well-being
- d) A beacon employer for EDI and likewise for pupils & students and our curriculum across phases
- e) Distribute leadership

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Trustees' report (continued)

Strategic report

Financial health

The financial health of the Trust remains sound particularly given the national educational funding environment and the factors specific to the Trust outlined below.

- Reserves

The Trust started the year with a strong reserves position and this has been maintained that despite some utilisation of the reserves in 2023/24 through prudent management of funds. The level of reserve carried forward to 2024/25 has been retained as a precaution against future uncertainty. Given the national funding position and the challenges of the increasing staff cost base, it will be necessary for those reserves to be used very carefully whilst awaiting more information on future funding allocations. Further details of the Trust's reserves policy can be found on page 19.

- Best use of resources and maximising income

The Trust has continued to focus on ensuring value for money in all activities undertaken by maximising income and controlling costs as outlined in the Value for Money section of the Governance report.

Pupil Premium

Our use of Pupil Premium across the Academy Trust is consistent with the Department for Education's aim to eliminate barriers to learning and achievement based on home circumstances.

The Trust has fully engaged with the principles of Pupil Premium funding and has embedded those principles in planning and monitoring of attainment to ensure that these funds have the desired impact.

Full details of Pupil Premium grant expenditure, impact of the strategy and the strategy for 2024-25 can be found on the separate academies' websites.

Fundraising

The majority of the Trust's income is derived from grant funding. The Trust does receive a small number of donations but does not raise any funds direct from the public.

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Trustees' report (continued)

Key Performance Indicators - Trust

The Trust is very proud of its constituent academies. The standards achieved and maintained are derived from outstanding leadership driven by the ethos of the Trust that 'good is not good enough!'

The Headteachers (line managed by the CEO and DCEO) and their teams work collaboratively and positively together in order to provide stronger outcomes and opportunities for the children. Such collaboration is one of the few imperatives the Trust directs any 'good' school investigating conversion and joining in. The Headteachers benefit from the 24/7 access to the CEO as an NLE, deriving support, challenge and advice. Academy evaluation is an ongoing and collaborative process where the headteachers work the CEO and DCEO.

Evaluation focuses on Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership & Management, EYFS (where applicable). It is documented in an academy on a page summary which has been shown below for all the academies who have been in the Trust for the whole reporting period.

Trustees' report (continued)

Chichester Free School – Academy on a Page

School Evaluation - SED July 2024.pdf						
	Quality of Education	Behaviour and Attitudes	Personal Development	Leadership & Management	EYFS	Overall
Current https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50249310	GoodDeveloping	GoodDeveloping	OutstandingSecure	GoodSecure	GoodDeveloping	Good
Target in 12 months	GoodSecure	GoodSecure	OutstandingSecure	OutstandingDeveloping	GoodSecure	Good
Specific strengths identified in the Self-evaluation document (SED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Through curriculum development. Broad and balanced curriculum throughout Thriving teacher training Clear and robust target setting and assessment processes Strong phonics and Year 6 attainment outcomes Consistently secure English results at GCSE, at 4+ and 5+ Strong PSHE delivery Improving GCSE results, with specific improvements in Maths, Science and History Increasingly robust L and T policy – we are on a clear journey Very strong progress for SEND learners in the Secondary phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant improvement in behaviour since Ofsted 2029 Clear processes, systems and extensive interventions Eagle Point and Tree House Praise and rewards at the forefront Focus on both social and learning behaviours Culture of Kindness initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSHE provision, Careers support, Futures Hub, world of work. All relevant Gatsby Benchmarks achieved Extensive club, enrichment, trips and cultural capital offer House System British Values focus Pupil Voice and Leadership CFS Passport Mental Health support e.g. Avocado project Our USP 'Exceptional' pastoral support – extensive and passionate team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relentless, reflective and ambitious Senior Leadership High staff morale – staff survey/Ofsted staff voice Knowledge of school through internal and external monitoring School values at core of curriculum Improved CPD and external networking School growth -Trust, PAN, land Strengthening middle leadership Strong, 'exemplary' safeguarding including rigorous recruitment processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum planning and coherence Staff are experts in teaching systematic, synthetic phonics Responding to the interests of the children Parental engagement offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thriving, popular school – both pupils & recruitment. Largest ever cohort and waiting lists in all year groups Strong reputation in local area Assessment and data approaches Pastoral support and behaviour standards Clear and explicit values and ambitions Personal development offer All through opportunities Rapid improvements and continual strive for excellence
Specific areas identified for improvement in the (SED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued improvement in GCSE outcomes, especially in Science, Business Studies and MFL Primary writing attainment Ensure guiding principles are evident in all lessons – CFS pedagogy and consistent delivery Consistency of learning and teaching Embedding more robust monitoring processes Ambition, learning behaviours, independent learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social time behaviour Behaviour for learning not always consistent Ensuring our multi-cultural society is truly celebrated and respected by all A small impactful minority Attendance below pre-pandemic (DA in particular) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase SEND and Disadvantaged participation Healthy schools needs renewed focus Primary competitive sports Cross phase opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent middle leadership Further engagement with Trust opportunities Land development for sport Increase impact of quality assurance processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further work on learning environment – although huge improvements Responding to staff changes Consistent assessment methods Early writing standards 	<p>ADP All Through Summary 24-25.pdf</p>

Trustees' report (continued)

Northlands Wood Primary Academy – Academy on a Page

School Evaluation - Link to the SED here						
	Quality of Education	Behaviour and Attitudes	Personal Development	Leadership & Management	EYFS	Overall
Current	GoodSecure	OutstandingEmerging	OutstandingDeveloping	OutstandingEmerging	OutstandingSecure	Good
Target in 12 months	OutstandingEmerging	OutstandingDeveloping	OutstandingSecure	OutstandingSecure	OutstandingSecure	Outstanding
Specific strengths identified in the Self-evaluation document (SED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coherently planned curriculum Provision and adaptation for SEND Early reading / phonics Vocabulary development Broad and balanced curriculum Outdoor learning / Forest School The disadvantaged pupils in Y6 (2024) attained significantly better than other similar pupils nationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils have a positive attitude towards their education/learning Pupils show respect towards one another, staff and visitors Positive environment and a cultural of support and nurture at NWWPA Pupils are, and feel, safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil leadership opportunities Pupils have access to a wide, rich set of experiences Character education underpins learning Meaningful opportunities to be responsible, respectful, active citizens Effective promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff receive focused and highly effective CPD Staff consistently report high levels of support for wellbeing issues Leaders engage effectively with pupils and others in their community Leaders deal with any staff issues appropriately and quickly Safeguarding is effective, with regular, well-considered training and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of early years education provided is exceptional Pupils are highly motivated and deeply engaged in their learning Vocabulary acquisition is at the centre of curriculum planning Incredibly knowledgeable and experienced staff team High quality environments are created inside and outside 	
Specific areas identified for improvement in the (SED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our teachers and leaders increasingly use assessment well – for example, to help pupils embed and use knowledge fluently, to check understanding and inform teaching Increase the attainment of pupils in writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WTS to EXS - Y3, 5, 6 EXS to GDS - Y2, Y6 Further develop the Curious Quest writing approach to ensure the most able writers in Y2 make sustained progress Y5 - creation of Elm class Y 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved levels of attendance for PP/FSM children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further opportunities for PP/FSM children to represent the school Increased awareness of how to protect our planet and support a sustainable future for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of monitoring to track and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of staff confidence when assessing pupil outcomes, particularly in Writing The use of achievement data to self-evaluate, to inform development plans and to evaluate progress against development priorities. Staff wellbeing further prioritised Curriculum review with an aim to improve wellbeing of pupils/staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of technology and computing experiences in Early Years 	

Trustees' report (continued)

Warden Park Primary Academy – Academy on a Page

School Evaluation - Link to the SED here					
	Quality of Education	Behaviour and Attitudes	Personal Development	Leadership & Management	EYFS
Current	Good ▾ Developing ▾	Good ▾ Secure ▾	Good ▾ Secure ▾	Good ▾ Secure ▾	Good ▾ Secure ▾
July 2025 Target	Good ▾ Secure ▾	Outstanding ▾ Emerging ▾	Outstanding ▾ Emerging ▾	Outstanding ▾ Emerging ▾	Outstanding ▾ Emerging ▾
Specific strengths identified in the Self-evaluation document (SED)	<p>Teaching and Learning - Incredible consistency of approach to T&L across all areas of the curriculum. Teachers are skilled and committed.</p> <p>Adaptation - Teachers have high level of understanding of the needs of their class and teaching is scaffolded</p> <p>Curriculum - The curriculum is of a high quality with consistent high expectations and standards across all year groups. Children's books demonstrate: Frequent and helpful feedback evident Challenge and appropriately judged work are typical of the provision Pupils are making demonstrable progress over time</p> <p>Pupils <u>take a pride</u> in their work and teacher expectations are high.</p> <p>English - Reading - Assessment and Intervention (Fluency assessments/ fluency teaching)</p> <p>Phonics - Whole school consistent approach with all staff trained to a high standard and effectiveness</p> <p>SEND - Teacher knowledge of supporting children and tracking their progress through ISPs.</p>	<p>Relationships across the school are strong and children show excellent attitudes towards learning</p> <p>Pupils are proud of their school and want to succeed for themselves and to please their teachers.</p> <p>Pupils enjoy their learning</p> <p>They are able to talk with clarity and confidence about what their strengths and areas to improve are</p> <p>They are able to describe how they develop their writing and how they enjoy the drafting and crafting process</p> <p>Embedded Therapeutic approach to behaviour with ongoing updated training for all new staff. Children demonstrate consistently excellent learning behaviours creating a very calm and purposeful learning environment.</p> <p>Strong pastoral support.</p>	<p>Wellbeing curriculum well established to develop children's understanding of themselves and others. Social Thinking curriculum developed by staff <u>member</u> and now distributed across the county.</p> <p>Experiences - Pupils have access to a wide rich set of rich experiences through the curriculum and these experiences considerably strengthen our school's offer.</p> <p>Extra-curricular - Pupils have access to a wide rich set of extra-curricular activities, and there's strong take-up by pupils of the opportunities provided by our school. The most disadvantaged pupils <u>consistently</u> benefit from this excellent work.</p>	<p>Leaders have completed a range of school improvement innovations that have brought about significant change and improvement.</p> <p>Middle Leaders - Have had high quality leadership training for all teaching staff.</p> <p>Senior Leaders - Established team of experienced senior leaders with adaptability to support teachers in all roles.</p> <p>Parental Engagement - Parents further involved in opportunities to engage in their child's learning. Parent workshops have been targeted to support our lowest attainers to support parents in helping their children at home.</p>	<p>Phonics and Early Reading - Leadership of this area is strong which is demonstrated by the improvement in staff skill at delivering the program and pupils outcomes</p> <p>Early Writing - The adoption and development of a new writing approach to ensure that the key skills are explicitly taught and practised has shown increased attainment in early writing.</p> <p>Accurate tracking and assessment and use of data to plan for next steps. All staff demonstrate a clear understanding of which stage their pupils are.</p>
Specific areas identified for improvement in the (SED)	<p>English - Writing PVPG (training; implementation beyond the initial units; impact on outcomes)</p> <p>Maths - Improving attainment (movement from WTS to EXS)</p> <p>SEND - Accurate assessment of progress for SEN (lowest 20% incl) and inclusion of those children in class (Increased Independence), increased participation in class of high needs children</p>	<p>Focus on developing staff understanding of improving prosocial behaviours.</p> <p>Wellbeing policy - <u>whole school focus</u> on 'above and beyond' behaviour to raise pupils' understanding of prosocial behaviour.</p> <p>Attendance - ensure that swift and effective action is taken to promote good attendance in all pupil groups</p>	<p>Provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to understand how to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society</p> <p>Support pupils to be confident, resilient and independent, and to develop strength of character</p> <p>Provide a wide range of opportunities to nurture, develop and stretch pupils' talents and interests. Pupils appreciate these and make good use of them and these opportunities serve to increase pupils' 'cultural capital';</p>	<p>Role of Senior Leaders - Increased accountability for the tracking of attainment and Progress to support teachers.</p> <p>Curriculum Leadership - Ofsted Ready in their ownership and impact on their subject</p> <p>Parental engagement with their child's learning - Whole school approach to improve the partnership between home and school. (reading: library, parental workshops, parents in reading)</p>	<p>L&M - Effective induction of new support staff leads to secure knowledge of the areas of learning and understanding of how children learn for consistent teaching of the curriculum and appropriate use of assessment</p> <p>B&A - The Characteristics of Effective learning are evident in pupil's attitudes and behaviours.</p> <p>PD - Enriching the curriculum to have more experiences that promote an understanding of, and respect for, people, families and communities beyond their own.</p>

Trustees' report (continued)

Warden Park Secondary Academy – Academy on a Page

School Evaluation - Link to the full SED here

	Quality of Education	Behaviour and Attitudes	Personal Development	Leadership & Management	Overall
Current	Outstanding Emerging	Outstanding Emerging	Good Secure	Outstanding Emerging	Outstanding
Target in 12 months	Outstanding Emerging	Outstanding Emerging	Outstanding Emerging	Outstanding Emerging	Outstanding
Specific strengths identified in the Self-evaluation document (SED)	<p>3 'Is' a real strength.</p> <p>The curriculum is rich and deep and offers a wealth of opportunities for the students.</p> <p>All subjects are expertly taught by specialists.</p> <p>High aspirations for all students</p> <p>The content of the curriculum builds successfully upon the primary curriculum. Continuity across phases is ensured through collaborative arrangements.</p> <p>The content covers the national curriculum and, in many areas, goes beyond.</p> <p>Assessment is used very well to identify gaps, address any shortfalls and restructure the curriculum.</p> <p>Students with access arrangements are very supported.</p> <p>Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well known and supported.</p>	<p>Behaviour is at least 'good' and often 'outstanding'.</p> <p>Pastoral system is well-resourced and highly regarded by all stakeholders.</p> <p>Student voice demonstrates bullying is rare and dealt with when evident.</p> <p>Strong support given to students struggling to self-regulate.</p> <p>Students want to achieve well.</p>	<p>Strong extra-curricular programme</p> <p>Character education entirely embedded;</p> <p>Five core character virtues, Curiosity, Kindness, Respect, Responsibility and Resilience, make up our Excellent Character Framework</p> <p>Strong Learning About Life curriculum - topics related to respectful and positive relations, rights and responsibilities.</p> <p>Equality and diversity taught in specific modules in Year 7 and Year 9 Learning About Life.</p> <p>An EDI kitemark was achieved in 2022.</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing a specific part of the taught PE curriculum</p> <p>Preparation for the next stage of learning/careers guidance is highly developed.</p>	<p>A strong safeguarding culture throughout the school. Safer recruitment practices meet statutory expectations.</p> <p>students are taught how to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>students know someone to talk to if they have any concerns.</p> <p>Governors and trustees are challenging, and supportive, of leadership.</p> <p>A strong improvement programme supports the strategic objectives of the academy and is complemented by a Review, Development and Progression system that is valued by teachers.</p> <p>Staff and students are very positive about the mental health & wellbeing support they receive.</p> <p>Serious consideration is giving to supporting colleagues with workload</p>	
Specific areas identified for improvement in the (SED)	<p>ALPS 2 for all subjects</p> <p>Improve consistency of implementation</p> <p>Excellence in lessons results in students having to think hard and is underpinned by outstanding schemes of learning. Frequent opportunities to develop students' oracy, reading and extended writing is evident in all curriculum areas.</p>	<p>Improve attendance to 96%</p> <p>Students conduct is outstanding both in and out of lesson time. All staff hold all students to the highest of expectations in terms of expectations of work produced and conduct at all times.</p>	<p>Improve the quality of implementation of tutor time programmes.</p> <p>Students personal development is supported by a purposeful tutor programme whilst Communities celebrate those who show excellence and promote a culture of high aspirations.</p>	<p>Improve the timings of the school day to enhance teaching and learning</p> <p>Leaders at all levels use a range of data to ensure rapid intervention where required. Quality assurance of learning is a fundamental part of leaders' roles and a key driver in our drive for excellence.</p>	

Trustees' report (continued)

Woodgate Primary Academy – Academy on a Page

School Evaluation - Link to the SED here

	Quality of Education	Behaviour and Attitudes	Personal Development	Leadership & Management	EYFS	Overall
Current	Requires Improvement Developing	Requires Improvement Secure	Requires Improvement Developing	Requires Improvement Secure	Requires Improvement Secure	Requires Improvement Developing
Target in 12 months	Good Secure	Good Secure	Good Secure	Good Secure	Good Secure	Good Secure
Specific strengths identified in the Self-evaluation document (SED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved consistency of QFT. Effective use of assessment information to ensure teaching is increasingly well matched to pupils' needs. Implementation and improvement in the quality of teaching and learning of phonics/early reading, writing and number. Reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer. Improved presentation and pride in work. Outcomes are improving towards national averages. Curriculum intent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to a comprehensive CPD programme, staff consistently implement the behaviour policy. As a result, relationships among our pupils and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture; pupils are safe and they feel safe. We have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct, which are applied consistently and fairly, including restorative approaches to incidents of anti-social behaviour. A newly implemented behaviour tracking system, behaviour logs allow behaviour trends to be monitored closely. Leaders' support for staff in managing pupils' behaviour. The demonstrable improvement in the behaviour and attendance of all pupils, including those who have particular needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of high-quality pastoral support, including ELSA and ZOR education result in a reduction in anti-social behaviour and an increase in pupils' ability to regulate themselves. A values-led approach to assemblies and learning is developing pupils' strength of character. The improving provision of meaningful opportunities for pupils to understand how to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society, including pupil leadership roles. An increased number of opportunities to nurture, develop and stretch pupils' talents and interests - through clubs and school trips. Our pupils know how to eat healthily, maintain an active lifestyle and keep physically and mentally healthy. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education to all pupils. Through a comprehensive CPD programme, leaders are improving teachers' subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge in order to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. Leaders engage effectively with pupils and others in their community, including, when relevant, parents, employers and local services. Engagement opportunities are focused and have purpose. Due to revised data tracking and analysis, pupils are developing increasingly detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum. An effective culture of safeguarding - consistently professionally curious staff team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A focus on vocabulary acquisition and the development of effective communication skills and phonic knowledge through RWI and Drawing Club is resulting in increasingly confident and fluent readers. Improved consistency of QFT. The use of assessment to ensure teaching is increasingly well matched to pupils' needs. Implementation and improvement in the quality of teaching and learning of phonics/early reading, writing and number. Reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer. Improved presentation and pride in work. Outcomes are improving towards national averages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a clear and aspirational improvement plan led by headteacher The HT accurately self-evaluates the school Leaders have and can articulate a clear and ambitious vision underpinned by shared values. The school is actively removing barriers for pupils to fully participate and achieve well in all aspects of school life.
Specific areas identified for improvement in the (SED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of education has effective elements and is consistent. Coherent planning and sequencing are developing within and between subjects. Teachers are developing their understanding of the curriculum design and their place in implementing it. Grammarsaurus curriculum intent from Youtube video. Curriculum redesign to make the vision statement a reality. Adaptive teaching is developing well in meeting the needs of most pupils, including. All groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve at least in line with national averages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure consistently effective QFT so that low-level disruption isn't tolerated and pupils' behaviour doesn't disrupt lessons or the day-to-day life of the school. Our pupils' attitudes to their education are consistently positive. Pupils increasingly demonstrate a commitment to their learning, know how to study effectively and do so, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements. Attendance is at or above the national average and persistent absence is at or below the national average for all pupils and those in vulnerable groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our curriculum and our school's effective wider work support pupils to be increasingly confident, resilient and independent, and to develop strength of character. We provide a wider range of opportunities to nurture, develop and stretch pupils' talents and interests. Through the redesigned curriculum we promote diversity effectively. As a result, our pupils understand, appreciate and respect difference in the world and its people, celebrating the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders are focused on developing a curriculum that is broad and ambitious for all pupils to make the vision statement a reality. This will be realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice. Induction of new staff to ensure that teachers receive focused and highly effective professional development. The governing board is fulfilling its strategic functions and has been involved in and can articulate the school's vision and strategy. Governors can articulate the impact of their work on outcomes for pupils. The governing board is aware of its statutory duties which are met. Governors hold leaders to account. The curriculum more clearly demonstrates a commitment for safeguarding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of education has effective elements and is consistent. Coherent planning and sequencing are developing within and between subjects. Teachers are developing their understanding of the curriculum design and their place in implementing it. Grammarsaurus curriculum intent from Youtube video. Curriculum redesign to make the vision statement a reality. Adaptive teaching is developing well in meeting the needs of most pupils, including. All groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve at least in line with national averages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All key judgements are 'good' The school has a clear and aspirational improvement plan which has been created with a range of stakeholders. Highly effective professional development is integral to the plan. School leadership is able to offer some support for other schools. Leaders and governors accurately self-evaluate the school as good against the Ofsted criteria. Leaders and governors can demonstrate some areas of strength working within the allocated budget, resources are used and managed well

Sussex Learning Trust

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Trustees' report (continued)

Going Concern

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

Reserves Policy

At 31 August 2024, the Trust has total funds of £71,436,000 (2023: £39,341,000) and fixed asset funds at the same date total £70,742,000 (2023: £38,422,000). At 31 August 2024, the Restricted General Fund had a nil balance (2023: nil balance).

For its own purposes, the Academy Trust excludes the FRS102 Section 28 calculated liability when calculating free reserves but has considered the cash flow implications that may arise from the accounting disclosure in terms of increased contributions. Trustees have approved a plan to work towards holding a reserve of c £651,000 at the end of 2024/25. This level of reserve will allow the Trust to undertake some development activity, manage funding uncertainty and provide some security against unexpected issues or events.

The Academy Trust has £694,000 in the Unrestricted General Fund as at 31 August 2024 (2023: £919,000). This reserve has been generated over a number of years through academy commercial activity such as catering and letting and from fundraising activities. This fund is freely available for its general purposes and has been held as an accumulating fund for major capital projects to enhance teaching and learning facilities in accordance with the Trust and member Academy Development Plans as well as supporting core activities in the current funding environment. The draw on funds in 2023/24 has largely supported Trust expansion. During the year, a transfer of £1,571,000 (2023: £750,000) was made from the unrestricted fund to restricted funds to support core activity as well as contributing to capital expenditure.

Investment Policy

In the year ended 31 August 2024, higher interest deposit accounts have been used to achieve a more favourable return on funds where appropriate.

Risk Management

The trustees have assessed the key risks to which the Academy Trust may be exposed, in particular those relating to pupil numbers, educational outcomes, the challenges of recruiting and retaining staff in shortage subjects, estate management and Health & Safety, the development of our facilities, academy funding, finance and Trust expansion.

Trustees' report (continued)

Trustees have implemented a number of systems to assess and mitigate the risks that the Academy Trust faces in relation to all the areas mentioned above, most notably a robust risk register.

As part of a long-term strategic approach to risk management; the trustees have developed, and will maintain, a risk register identifying the major areas of risk to which the Academy Trust and its member academies are exposed. The register identifies actions and procedures to mitigate those risks. This register is overseen and monitored by the CEO, Deputy CEO, CFO, CPO and CEDO and by Board of Trustees and via the Local Governing bodies and Audit & Risk committee. The principal risks facing the Academy Trust at a strategic level are outlined below in the principal risks and uncertainties section; those facing the Academy at an operational level are addressed by its systems and by internal financial and other controls; for further details see the Governance Statement below.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The following key risks and uncertainties have been identified

1) Financial health & sustainability for our vision

- a) There is limited visibility on future funding therefore there is a risk that funding may not be sufficient to support trust priorities.
- b) The funded and unfunded cost pressures e.g. teacher pay awards and upward pressure on support staff pay resulting from NLW increases now and in future years and NI / pensions
- c) Depleting reserves
- d) Variable pupil/student numbers - demographic, new schools, reputational risk
- e) Catering function is subject to significant additional costs relating to staff costs and cost of catering provisions.
- f) Limited Trust growth due to changes in government policy
- g) Financial systems related risks.
- h) Fraud
- i) Macroeconomic factors such as inflation

2) HR, staffing and expertise

- a) Over reliance on key officers
- b) Over reliance on key trustees and governors
- c) Retention and recruitment of excellent staff Breaching Employment Law through negligence (arising from error or ignorance)
- d) Failure to comply with the DDA

3) GDPR & Digital

- a) Data breach – legal and reputational implications
- b) Cyber security risk
- c) Digital technology / system risk
- d) Digital lead personnel absence

Trustees' report (continued)

4) Health & Safety

- a) Negligence in the workplace
- b) Statutory compliance related risk
- c) Duty of care to all stakeholders

5) Safeguarding

- a) KCSIE not complied with
- b) Trust wide Safeguarding Policy not adhered to leading to a failure
- c) Recruitment screening failure
- d) Major incident

6) Business Continuity in the face of adversity

- a) Related to Pupil and student accommodation
- b) Data loss
- c) Loss of senior personnel

7) Core Purpose Performance

- a) Pupil / student outcome data that is less than 'good'
- b) OFSTED outcomes
- c) Lack of ability to recruit and retain 'good' staff
- d) Lack of ability to recruit and train new headteachers

Effective risk management involves three types of action:

Transferring the risk

Insurance is a means of transferring those risks the Trust decides not to accept. It limits the Trust's exposure to risk but it is not a substitute for active risk management. To the extent that the Trust manages its risks effectively, its insurance premiums will be lower, providing better value for money.

Reducing the probability of risk

The Trust will seek to identify the risks to Trust funds, property and people using their premises, collect them in a risk register and assess the potential frequency and severity of each risk, where possible based on careful analysis or recent experience. Action will be taken to prevent or reduce the probability of risk, particularly of those risks identified as high frequency and/or high severity.

Limiting the impact of risk

The Trust will continue to complete and review the risk register as a formal record of problems that could occur in the future which will impact on day to day operations. Effective monitoring of Academy Trust operations by the Trustees, Trust Officers, Local Governing Bodies and leadership teams in each academy will contribute to mitigate risks. This monitoring includes an annual review of the risk register and ongoing reporting of newly identified risks.

Sussex Learning Trust

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Trustees' report (continued)

The Trust will continue to develop an Emergency / Critical Incident and Business Continuity Procedures aimed at both protecting personal health and safety and minimising the disruption to normal operations that an unforeseen emergency would cause. Where necessary, the Trust will continue to develop contingency plans for particular risks identified as high frequency and/or high severity.

The Academy Trust operates systems, including operational procedures and internal financial controls in order to minimise risk.

The key controls used by the Academy Trust include:

- formal agendas for all trustees' meetings
- formal agendas and work programme for the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee
- detailed terms of reference for all committees
- formal written policies that are subject to regular and systematic review
- strategic planning, budgeting and management accounting according to a rigorous agreed timetable
- clear authorisation and approval levels as well as clearly defined purchasing guidelines

Plans for the future

The Trust has identified the following strategic aims in the 2024-27 Strategic Improvement plan.

1 Vision, values, strategy and culture

- 1.1 An ambitious vision underpinned by shared values and a high-trust culture
- 1.2 A coherent but responsive strategy with clarity on core team and school-based roles
- 1.3 Alignment around shared practices which support improvement

2 People, learning and capacity

- 2.1 An effective approach to recruiting, developing and retaining high quality staff
- 2.2 Systems to identify, develop and deploy leadership expertise to address school improvement needs
- 2.3 Systematic ways of moving knowledge and evidence around, within and between schools

3 Assessment, curriculum and pedagogy

- 3.1 Shared age related expectations and a consistent approach to assessment
- 3.2 Shared principles for a curriculum which aligns with the wider vision
- 3.3 Develop shared principles for teaching, learning and the success of learners

4 Quality assurance and accountability

- 4.1 Fit for purpose collection, analysis and reporting of school and group-wide performance data
- 4.2 Use quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate school performance and to inform next steps
- 4.3 Appropriate challenge and support for member academies

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Trustees' report (continued)

5 A sustainable learning organisation

5.1 Financial sustainability demonstrated in balanced budgets and demonstrable value for money in relation to the vision & values

5.2 Estates/Premises provide excellent environments to complement the ambitious vision

5.3 Growth - collaborative work provides opportunities and best value resource deployment

The board of Trustees have been fundamental to the formulation of this strategy and are confident that it aligns with the trust's charitable objects, covers all pillars of trust quality and sets out its aspirations for growth over time. Trustee committees, link roles and board meetings will:

- Ensure that the trust is performing effectively in all areas in accordance with its vision, strategic aims and key performance indicators.
- Hold the CEO and Central team to account for the educational performance of the Trust and its pupils;
- Oversee the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Key Trust-wide performance indicators:

Academies remain oversubscribed with 'first-choice' learners.

The Quality of Education is rated as at least 'good' across all academies with the aim to be 'Outstanding'

Pupil/students outcomes show trends towards top 5% performance indicators across all (most) academies, especially for disadvantaged learners.

Global Strategic Priority - Each academy will be carbon neutral by 2050.

Sussex Learning Trust

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Trustees' report (continued)

Trade union facility time

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

Relevant union officials

<i>Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period</i>	<i>Full-time equivalent employee number</i>
8	6

Percentage of time spent on facility time

<i>Percentage of time</i>	<i>Number of employees</i>
0%	0
1-50%	8
51%-99%	0
100%	0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

<i>First Column</i>	<i>Figures</i>
Provide the total cost of facility time	£6k
Provide the total pay bill	£20,278k
Provide the percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time, calculated as: (total cost of facility time ÷ total pay bill) x 100	0.03%

Paid trade union activities

As a percentage of total paid facility time hours, how many hours were spent by employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period on paid trade union activities?

50%

Sussex Learning Trust

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Trustees' report (continued)

STREAMLINED ENERGY AND CARBON REPORTING REPORT FOR INCLUSION IN TRUSTEES REPORT		
UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024	Current Reporting Year 2023/24	Comparison Reporting Year 2022/23
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh)	2,146,926	2,410,071
Energy consumption break down (kWh) (optional):		
• gas	1,435,487	1,767,368
• electricity	689,318	626,305
• transport fuel	22,121	16,398
Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e		
Gas consumption	262.55	322.62
Owned transport – mini-buses	5.81	3.93
Total Scope 1	268.36	326.55
Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e		
Purchased electricity	142.72	121.11
Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e		
Business travel in employee owned vehicles	1.82	1.59
Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e	412.90	449.25
Intensity ratio Tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.10	0.19

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 2022 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

The intensity ratio in 2023-24 has decreased largely as a result of reductions in gas consumption. This is partly attributable to climate conditions (mild winter) and partly to improvements in insulation and boiler performance.

Sussex Learning Trust

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Trustees' report (continued)

The trustees wish to acknowledge the following:

- The leadership provided by the CEO, the Headteachers and their senior leadership teams as trustees seek to develop and expand the Academy Trust.
- The commitment of all of the staff, teaching and support, for the manner in which they have continued to deliver an increasingly effective learning and support environment for our learners.
- The parent teachers associations for their continued enthusiasm and commitment to fund raising to provide additional opportunities and facilities for our learners.
- The continued support of West Sussex County Council and Mid Sussex District Council.
- The strong support from pupils, families and the whole community.

The trustees' thanks go to all, for their part in the continued success of the Trust.

Auditor

In so far as the trustees are aware:

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

This report, incorporating the strategic report, was approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 18 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



J Ash-Edwards

Chair

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Governance Statement

Scope of Responsibility

As trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Sussex 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 has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the CEO, 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 Sussex Learning Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the board of trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplement that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities. The board has formally met 6 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Trustees	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
J Ash-Edwards (Chair)	6	6
J Allik	5	6
J Gray	6	6
E Gunter	5	6
H Hill (Vice Chair)	6	6
P Hiscock	6	6
P Potter	5	6
S Robertson	6	6
K Russ (appointed 17/7/24)	0	0
R Stevens	6	6
J Thompson (resigned 31/12/23)	2	2
S Veluswamy	5	6
N Waters (appointed 7/6/24)	0	1

The Local Governing Bodies have delegated responsibilities as set out in the Scheme of Delegation (see SLT website) in respect of governance, finance and contracts, curriculum and standards, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Sussex Learning Trust

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Governance Statement (continued)

Warden Park Secondary Academy Local Governing Body attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
J Ash-Edwards (Chair)	6	6
K Dean (appointed 27/11/23)	4	4
N Dyson (resigned 6/12/23)	0	2
S Gabriel (resigned 4/12/23)	1	2
S Hashemi	6	6
T Hosking	6	6
K James (appointed 26/6/24)	1	1
D Kenrick	6	6
N Mortimer	5	6
G Scutt (appointed 15/11/23)	3	5
R Stevens	5	6
R Stoneley	5	6
G Stewart	4	6
E Upsdell	6	6

Warden Park Primary Academy Local Governing Body attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
J Allik (Vice Chair)	4	6
J Ash-Edwards (resigned 9/10/23)	1	1
D Ayres	6	6
E Brodie	6	6
M Burbidge	3	6
L Doe	5	6
M Field	4	6
E Gunter (Chair)	6	6
R Jowett	5	6
L Meagher (resigned 16/4/24)	2	4
A Rutherford (appointed 3/7/24)	1	1
B Swithenbank	5	6
A Whittle	6	6

Sussex Learning Trust

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Governance Statement (continued)

Governance (continued)

Northlands Wood Primary Academy Local Governing Body attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings Attended	Out of a Possible
R Allen	3	6
A Bromage-Hughes	5	6
Lauren Brown	5	6
M Downham	5	6
C Edgell	6	6
L Hother	5	6
M Hutton (Auth leave of absence)	3	6
K James	4	6
J Newton	5	6
M Sears	5	6
S Sedgley (Resigned 5/10/23)	1	1
R Stevens (Chair since 01/10/23)	6	6
J Vine (Appointed 11/7/24)	1	1

Woodgate Primary Academy Local Governing Body attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
J Bird	6	6
J Hartwell (resigned 12/3/24)	1	4
S Neller (Headteacher)	6	6
M Parnell (Chair)	6	6
PI Rycroft	4	6
J Warwick (resigned 12/3/24) (Vice Chair)	4	4
R Whaley (resigned 17/7/24)	5	6
D Cove (appointed 21/11/23)	3	5
W Paul (appointed 21/11/23)	5	5
J Brydon (appointed 23/1/24) (Vice Chair)	3	4
D Phillpott (appointed 8/5/24)	1	2
B Buckstone (appointed 15/5/24)	1	2

Sussex Learning Trust

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Governance Statement (continued)

Chichester Free School Local Governing Body attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
H Humphry (resigned 29/9/23)	1	1
A Harris (Vice Chair)	10	10
A Mason	8	10
I Moore (Chair)	10	10
R Crowe	9	10
R Matthews	8	10
S Webb (resigned 27/11/23)	2	2
M Prior (appointed 22/9/23)	9	10
L New (Headteacher)	10	10
C Woodward (appointed 17/10/23)	7	9

Billingshurst Primary Academy Local Governing Body was convened on 1st June 2024 and attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
N Waters (Chair)	2	2
A Calver (Vice Chair)	2	2
M Ley (Headteacher)	1	2
C Evans	1	2
M Galea-Holmes	2	2
T Hampson	2	2
R Kelland	1	2
K Kulka	1	2
D Lowe	2	2
Y Rowe	2	2
R Runalls	2	2
S Samson	2	2

Sussex Learning Trust

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Governance Statement

Audit and Risk committee attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Committee member	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
S Gabriel (resigned 4/12/23)	0	1
P Hiscock	5	6
J Newton	3	6
S Robertson (Chair)	6	6
B Swithenbank	4	6
J Thompson (resigned 31/12/2023)	2	2
S Veluswamy (appointed 18/10/2023)	5	5
H Hill (appointed 18/10/2023)	3	5

Review of Value for Money

As accounting officer, the CEO has responsibility for ensuring that the Academy Trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. The accounting officer understands that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The accounting officer considers how the Trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the Board of Trustees where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data where available. The accounting officer for the Academy Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- Key contracts are appraised or renegotiated in a timely manner to get the best mix of quality and effectiveness. One, two and three year contracts have been entered into to ensure reduced cost. Where appropriate, detailed reviews of key contracts and ways of providing services were performed prior to renewal or where there is an opportunity to do things differently to ensure best value in both financial and non-financial terms. Specific examples include the tendering and selection of Utilities, ICT equipment and products.
- A Trust-led procurement system is used to negotiate contracts for services required to support students including Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language which has attracted high calibre professionals and secured cost savings across the Trust.
- The Trust regularly takes opportunities to work collaboratively with others to reduce and share administration or procurement costs.

Governance Statement (continued)

- Developing our approach to income generation and fundraising as an important part of the Trust's financial planning and achieving our objectives. All the academies in the Trust have active PTAs who contribute to annual fundraising and the Trust is actively engaged with local businesses / charitable organisations and successfully negotiated donations and sponsorship towards educational equipment, arts and sports events.
- Maximised income generation through a renewed focus on maintaining lettings activity which now exceed pre pandemic levels. Hiring our facilities also supports local community and not for profit organisations who will need this support. There are regular income streams from long-term core bookings which have achieved significant sums for example from hiring of academy halls and 3G Pitch.
- Value for money is also an important part of the Estate Management plan to ensure any safety or condition issues are addressed in a timely but cost effective way for example, by completing preventative works to avoid deterioration in the building condition which would lead to greater future expenditure. The risks related to RAAC have been considered and none has been identified on Trust premises.

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 Sussex Learning Trust for the year ended 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to Handle Risk

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

Managing conflicts of interest

The Board of Trustees manages conflicts of interest by maintaining and publishing an up-to-date and complete register of interests and by following the principles set out in the NGA Model Code of Conduct for example, if a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, the trustee or governor will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Governance Statement

The Risk and Control Framework

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

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees;
- regular reviews by the trustees and LGBs 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 appointed Carpenter Box as internal auditor for 2023/24. The internal auditor's role included giving advice on financial and other matters and performing a range of checks on the Academy Trust's financial and other systems. In particular, the checks carried out in the current period included:

- testing of payroll systems
- testing of purchase systems
- testing of control account/ bank reconciliations

The auditor reports to the Board of Trustees, through the Audit and Risk committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities and annually prepares an annual summary report to the committee outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Governance Statement (continued)

Review of Effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, the CEO 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 external consultants;
- the work of the external auditor;
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process;
- the work of the executive managers within the Academy Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

No material weaknesses have been identified through the above review. The Accounting Officer and management are committed to a process of continuous improvement and will continue to review and assess the system of internal control going forward in light of any changes to the Trust or developments in best practice.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 18 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



J Ash-Edwards
Chair



J Morris
Accounting Officer

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Statement on Regularity, Propriety and Compliance

As accounting officer of Sussex 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 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 2024, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

I confirm that I and the Academy Trust Board of Trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of all funds by the Academy Trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the Academy Trust's funding agreement and the Academy Trust Handbook 2024.

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 the ESFA.



J Morris

Accounting officer

18 December 2024

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

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

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards [FRS 102] have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business

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

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

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

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 18 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



J Ash-Edwards

Chair of Trustees

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Sussex Learning Trust Limited

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Sussex Learning Trust for the year ended 31 August 2024 which comprise the Statement of financial activities incorporating income and expenditure account, the Balance sheet, the Statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law 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).

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 2024 and of its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including the Academies' Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

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 charitable company 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'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.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Sussex Learning Trust Limited (continued)

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.

Opinion on other matter prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the trustees' report. We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- 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

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Sussex Learning Trust Limited (continued)

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 36, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company'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 to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charitable company's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charitable company for fraud. The key laws and regulations we considered in this context were General Data Protection Regulation, health and safety legislation and employee legislation.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Sussex Learning Trust Limited (continued)

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquire of the Trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any. We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing and completeness of income recognition and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management and the Board about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the ESFA, and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

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

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

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable 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 company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Crowe UK LLP

Matthew Howard
Senior Statutory Auditor
For and on behalf of

Crowe U.K. LLP, Statutory Auditor

Medway Bridge House, 1-8 Fairmeadow, Maidstone, ME14 1JP

18 December 2024

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Independent Auditor's Report on Regularity to the Trustees of Sussex Learning Trust Limited and the Education and Skills Funding Agency

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

This report is made solely to Sussex Learning Trust and the ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to Sussex Learning Trust and the 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 Sussex Learning Trust and the ESFA, for our work, for this report or for the conclusion we have formed.

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

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of Sussex Learning Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 1 September 2011 and the Academies Financial Handbook, extant from 1 September 2020, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Approach

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the 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.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Independent Auditor's Report on Regularity to the Trustees of Sussex Learning Trust Limited and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (continued)

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 a review of the design and implementation of the Academy Trust's internal controls and review processes on regularity, supported by detailed tests on samples of costs incurred by the Academy Trust and specific transactions identified from our review.

Conclusion

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

Crowe UK LLP

Matthew Howard
Senior Statutory Auditor
For and on behalf of
Crowe U.K. LLP, Statutory Auditor

Medway Bridge House, 1-8 Fairmeadow, Maidstone, ME14 1JP

18 December 2024

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 August 2024

(including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and losses)

		Unrestricted	Restricted	Restricted	Total	Total
		Funds	General	Fixed	Total	Total
	Note	£000	Funds	Asset	2024	2023
		£000	£000	Funds	£000	£000
Income and endowments from:						
Balances on conversion	4		(247)	4,837	4,590	3,578
Balances on transfer	4	198	3	27,586	27,787	-
Donations and capital grants	4	742	260	1,139	2,141	1,425
<i>Charitable activities:</i>						
. Funding for the Academy Trust's educational operations	7	563	22,679	-	23,242	14,111
Other trading activities	5	254	-		254	166
Investments	6					-
Total incoming resources		1,757	22,695	33,562	58,014	19,280
Expenditure on:						
Balances on conversion		-	-	-	-	-
Raising funds	7	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Charitable activities:</i>						
. Academy Trust's educational operations	8	411	24,620	1,242	26,273	15,743
Total resources expended	7	411	24,620	1,242	26,273	15,743
Net incoming resources (before transfers)		1,346	(1,925)	32,320	31,741	3,537
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds	19	(1,571)	1,571	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		(225)	(354)	32,320	31,741	3,537
Other recognised gains and losses						
Actuarial gains / (losses) on defined benefit pension schemes	19	-	354	-	354	295
Net movement in funds		(225)	-	32,320	32,095	3,832

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 August 2024

(including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and losses) (continued)

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	Funds	General	Fixed	2024	2023
	£000	Funds	Asset Funds	£000	£000
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward at 1 September	919	-	38,422	39,341	35,509
Total funds carried forward at 31 August	694	-	70,742	71,436	39,341

Sussex Learning Trust (Company number: 07705100)

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Balance sheet as at 31 August 2024

	Notes	2024 £000	2024 £000	2023 £000	2023 £000
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	14		70,411		38,231
Total fixed assets			70,441		38,231
Current assets					
Stock	15	9		9	
Debtors	16	2,168		1,244	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,720		1,839	
Total current assets		3,897		3,092	
Liabilities:					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	17	(2,570)		(1,632)	
Net current assets		1,327		1,460	
Total assets less current liabilities			71,768		39,691
Creditors: Amounts falling due after one year	18	(332)		(350)	
Net assets excluding pension liability			71,436		39,341
Pension scheme liability			-		-
Net assets including pension liability			71,436		39,341
Funds of the academy Trust:					
Restricted income funds					
. Fixed asset fund(s)	20		70,742		38,422
. General fund(s)	20		-		-
. Pension reserve	20		-		-
Total restricted funds			70,742		38,422
Unrestricted funds					
. General fund(s)	20		694		919
Total unrestricted funds			694		919
Total Funds			71,436		39,341

The financial statements on pages 43 to 72 were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 18 December 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



J Ash-Edwards - Chair

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Cash flow statement for the year ended 31 August 2024

		2024	2023
		£000	£000
Net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities	24	(289)	840
Returns on investments and servicing of finance	25	-	-
Capital expenditure & financial investment	26	170	(603)
Increase / (decrease) in cash in the year	27	(119)	237
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds			
Net funds at 1 September		1,839	1,602
Net funds at 31 August		1,720	1,839

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements

1. Company information

Sussex Learning Trust is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales (company registration number 07705100). The principal activity is that of provision of primary and secondary school education. Its registered address is at Broad Street, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5DP

2. Accounting Policies

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

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 accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Academies Accounts Direction 2020 to 2021 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

Sussex Learning Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

Going Concern

The trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the company to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of one year from the date of approval of the financial statements.

When satisfying themselves that the trust remains a going concern, management and trustees consider the level of current reserves, future forecast levels of funding and expected spending. Given the known and potential future increases in salaries and pension contributions, assumptions have been made in preparing the forecasts regarding the future funding of these additional costs. In the commentary accompanying the budget strategies for 2024-2027 for each member academy and for the central trust, the uncertainty surrounding the implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the wider education funding environment, the assumptions over the cost base and the prospects for trust expansion were all considered.

Notes to the Financial statements

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

Going Concern (continued)

Although there is considerable uncertainty over the factors outlined above, the trust has a track record of managing such uncertainty and the model presented to the trustees shows that the reserves are sufficient to avoid short term decision making and to secure the future of the trust going forward.

This is on the basis that the current assumptions relating to the staff cost base and inflation remain appropriate. Management and trustees are aware of the significance of such assumptions and update the forecasts when new information becomes available.

Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are recognised when the Academy Trust has entitlement to the funds, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

- **Grants receivable**

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 entitlement of receipt its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

General Annual Grant is recognised in full in the year for which it is receivable and any unspent amount is reflected as a balance in the restricted fund.

Capital grants are recognised when receivable and are not deferred over the life of the asset on which they are expended. Unspent amounts of capital grant are reflected in the balance in the restricted fixed asset fund.

- **Donations**

Donations are recognised on a receivable basis where there is certainty of receipt 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 goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

Notes to the Financial statements

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

- **Donated Services and gifts in kind**

The value of donated services and gifts in kind provided to the Academy Trust are recognised at their open market value in the period in which they are receivable as incoming resources, where the benefit to the Academy Trust can be reliably measured. An equivalent amount is included as expenditure under the relevant heading in the Statement of Financial Activities, except where the gift in kind was a fixed asset in which case the amount is included in the appropriate fixed asset category and depreciated over the useful economic life in accordance with Academy Trust policies.

- **Resources Expended**

All expenditure is recognised in the period in which a liability is incurred and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

- **Costs of generating funds**

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

- **Charitable activities**

These are costs incurred on the Academy Trust's educational operations.

- **Governance Costs**

These include the costs attributable to the Academy Trust's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and Governor's meetings and reimbursed expenses.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment. Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with the aid of specific grants, either from the government or from the private sector, they are included in the Balance Sheet at cost and depreciated over their expected useful economic life. The related grants are credited to a restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities and carried forward in the Balance Sheet. Depreciation on such assets is charged to the restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities so as to reduce the fund over the useful economic life of the related asset on a basis consistent with the Trust's depreciation policy.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

Tangible Fixed Assets (continued)

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

Long leasehold buildings	125 years
Freehold Land & Buildings	2% straight line on building only
Leasehold improvements	20 years
Fixtures, fittings and equipment	5 – 10
years	
ICT equipment	4 years
Motor Vehicles	5 years

Assets in the course of construction are included at cost. Depreciation on these assets is not charged until they are brought into use.

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.

Leased Assets

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

Stock

Catering stocks are valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

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.

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, are contracted out of the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme ('SERPS'), and the assets are held separately from those of the Academy Trust.

Notes to the Financial statements

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

Pension Benefits (continued)

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the Academy Trust in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by the Government Actuary on the basis of quinquennial valuations using a prospective benefit method. As stated in Note 31, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and the Academy Trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution scheme and the contributions recognised as they are paid each year.

The LGPS is a funded 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 method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs. Past service costs are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities if the benefits have vested. If the benefits have not vested immediately, the costs are recognised over the period until vesting occurs. The expected return on assets and the interest cost are shown as a net finance amount of other finance costs or credits adjacent to interest. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in other gains and losses.

Fund Accounting

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

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

Restricted general funds comprise all other restricted funds received and include grants from the Education Funding Agency and Department for Education.

It is the Academy Trust's policy to transfer any amounts in the Unrestricted Fund that have been spent on capitalised fixed assets to the Restricted Fixed Asset Fund. This policy has been formally approved, minuted and adopted by the Governing Body.

Notes to the Financial statements

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

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. 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.

i) Pension scheme: 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 (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 31, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2024. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

ii) Tangible fixed assets: the trustees annually assess both the residual value of these assets and the expected useful life of such assets based on experience

iii) Building valuations: The basis for valuing buildings transferred to the Trust on conversion is to use the most recent valuation provided by the Local Authority.

iv) Going concern: When satisfying themselves that the trust remains a going concern, management and trustees consider the level of current reserves, future forecast levels of funding and expected spending. Given the known and potential future increases in salaries and pension contributions, assumptions have been made in preparing the forecasts regarding the future funding of these additional costs. In the commentary accompanying the budget strategies for 2024-2027 for each member academy and for the central trust, the uncertainty surrounding the implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the wider education funding environment, the assumptions over the cost base and the prospects for trust expansion were all considered.

Although there is considerable uncertainty over the factors outlined above, the trust has a track record of managing such uncertainty and the model presented to the trustees shows that the reserves are sufficient to avoid short term decision making and to secure the future of the trust going forward.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements

Going concern (continued)

This is on the basis that the current assumptions relating to the staff cost base and inflation remain appropriate. Management and trustees are aware of the significance of such assumptions and update the forecasts when new information becomes available.

Transfer on conversion

Where assets and liabilities are received by the Trust on schools joining the Trust, the transferred assets are measured at fair value and recognised in the balance sheet at the point when the risks and rewards of ownership pass to the Trust. An equal amount of income is recognised as transfer on conversion within donations and capital grant income to the net assets received.

3. General Annual Grant (GAG)

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State the Academy Trust was subject to limits at 31 August 2024 on the amount of GAG that could be carried forward from one year to the next. An amount equal to 12% of GAG could be carried forward, of which up to 2% could be used for general recurrent purposes, with any balance being available for premises/capital purposes. The Academy Trust has not exceeded these limits during the year ended 31 August 2024.

4. Donations and capital grants	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted Funds £000	2024 Total £000	2023 Total £000
Balances on conversion / transfer in	198	(220)	(22)	(98)
Capital grants	-	1,139	1,139	584
Donated fixed assets	-	32,399	32,399	3,676
Other Donations	742	260	1,002	841
	940	33,578	34,518	5,003

5. Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted Funds £000	2024 Total £000	2023 Total £000
Hire of Facilities	254	-	254	166
	254	-	254	166

6. Investment income

	2024 Total	2023 Total
Bank interest	-	-

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

7. Funding for Academy Trust's educational operations

	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted Funds £000	Total 2024 £000	Total 2023 £000
DfE / ESFA revenue grants				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	19,049	19,049	11,865
UIFSM	-	246	246	130
Pupil premium	-	625	625	393
Other	-	1,582	1,582	736
	-	21,502	21,502	13,124
Other Government grants				
Local authority grants	-	1,177	1,177	517
	-			517
Catering income	563	-		470
	563	22,679	23,242	14,111

8. Resources expended

	Staff Costs 2024 £000	Premises 2024 £000	Non Pay Expenditure 2024 £000	Total 2024 £000	Total 2023 £000
Expenditure on raising funds	-	-	-	-	-
Academy Trust's educational operations					
. Direct costs	17,475	1,102	1,979	20,556	12,074
. Allocated support costs	2,803	140	2,774	5,717	3,669
	20,278	1,242	4,753	26,273	15,743

Net Incoming/outgoing resources for the year include:

	2024 £000	2023 £000
Operating leases	394	359
Fees payable to auditor – Statutory audit	29	20
– Other services	3	3
Legal costs	28	29

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

9 Charitable Activities

	2024	2023
	Total	Total
	£000	£000
Direct costs – educational operations	20,556	12,074
Support costs – educational operations	5,717	3,669
	26,273	15,743

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
	funds	funds	Total	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Analysis of support costs				
Support staff costs	-	2,803	2,803	1,739
Depreciation	-	55	55	24
Technology costs	-	121	121	116
Premises costs	-	1,413	1,413	781
Other support costs	411	846	1,257	948
Governance costs	-	68	68	61
	411	5,306	5,717	3,669

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

10. Staff costs	Total 2024 £000	Total 2023 £000
Staff costs during the period were:		
Wages and salaries	15,061	9,169
Social security costs	1,497	891
Other pension costs	3,527	2,036
	20,085	12,096
Supply teacher costs	193	24
Staff restructuring costs	-	-
	20,278	12,120

The average full time equivalent number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the Academy Trust during the year was as follows:

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Charitable Activities		
Teachers	214	121
Administration and support	197	197
Management	21	18
	431	262

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

	2024 No.	2023 No.
£60,000 - £70,000	8	2
£70,001 - £80,000	5	5
£80,001 - £90,000	4	1
£90,001 - £100,000	-	1
£100,001 - £130,000	3	1
£130,001 - £170,000	1	1

All 21 of the above employees in 2024 participated in the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The employees whose benefits exceed £100k are the CEO, DCEO, WPSA Headteacher and CFS Executive Principal.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

10. Staff costs (continued)

The key management personnel of the Academy Trust comprise the trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension & NI contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy Trust was £2,173,000 (2023: £1,207,000). Key management personnel are defined as the CEO, DCEO, CFO, CPO and CEDO, Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers for each member academy.

11. Central Services provided by the Multi Academy Trust

The central services provided by the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) include educational support and challenge for the Headteachers and leadership team, reviews of key educational strategies including standards, Academy development plan support & guidance, line management / performance management of Headteacher, governance support and guidance, whole trust projects, finance (including budget setting, monitoring & reporting and payroll services), HR, ICT strategy, contract procurement, operational consultancy, estates and facilities support.

The Partnership charge is calculated as a 'per pupil' for converter academies who are rated as good or outstanding by OFSTED. Specific rates are agreed for sponsored academies and other joining the trust as appropriate to their specific circumstances.

The Catering service charge for WPPA is based on the FSM and UIFSM funding received with the WPSA charge based on FSM funding.

Academy	Partnership charge (£'000)	Catering charge (£'000)
Warden Park Secondary Academy	289	65
Warden Park Primary Academy	85	106
Northlands Wood Primary Academy	78	-
Woodgate Primary Academy	16	-
Chichester Free School	99	-

12. Related Party Transactions - Trustees' remuneration and expenses

No trustees have been paid remuneration or have received other benefits from an employment with the Academy Trust in the financial year 2023-24 (2022-23 – nil). During the year ended 31 August 2024, no travel and subsistence expenses were paid directly or reimbursed to trustees. (2023: nil).

Related party transactions involving the trustees are set out in note 32.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

13. Directors' and Officers' Insurance

In accordance with normal commercial practice the Academy Trust has purchased insurance to protect trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Academy Trust business. The insurance provides cover up to £5,000,000 on any one claim and the cost for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £240 (2023: £240).

14. Tangible Fixed Assets

Cost	Freehold land & buildings	Long leasehold land	Long leasehold building	Leasehold improvements	Furniture & equipment	Computer equipment	Motor vehicles	Assets under construction	Total
At 1 Sept 2023	-	15,460	19,341	4,921	1,794	544	28	1,133	43,221
Transfer in	27,408	1,440	3,330	-	84	136	-	-	32,398
Additions	32	-	-	282	44	86	-	525	969
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer	-	-	-	1,133	-	-	-	1,133	-
At 31 August 2024	27,440	16,900	22,671	6,336	1,922	766	28	525	76,588
Acc depreciation									
At 1 Sept 2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charge	505	-	161	307	58	126	-	-	1,157
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 August 2024	505	-	1,492	1,869	1,693	560	28	-	6,147
NBV									
As at 31/08/2024	26,935	16,900	21,179	4,467	229	206	-	525	70,441
As at 1/09/2023	-	15,460	18,010	3,359	159	110	-	1,133	38,231

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

15. Stock

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
Catering	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>

Stock recognised in resources expended during the year as an expense was £386k (2023: £386k). The difference between purchase price and their replacement cost is not material.

16. Debtors

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
VAT recoverable	524	330
Other debtors	63	27
Prepayments & accrued income	1,581	887
	<u>2,168</u>	<u>1,244</u>

17. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
Trade creditors	523	363
Other taxation and social security	357	215
Other creditors	719	448
Accruals and deferred income	971	606
	<u>2,570</u>	<u>1,632</u>

Included within other creditors is a loan of £15k (2022: £15k) from SALIX which is an interest free loan for energy efficiency improvements and £31k (2022: £3k) CIF Public works loan.

Deferred income

	£000
Deferred income at 1 September 2023	352
Amounts released from previous years	(352)
Resources deferred in year	595
Deferred income at 31 August 2023	<u>595</u>

Deferred income relates to funding for UIFSM for 2024-25 and Pupil premium received in advance from the ESFA and SEN related funding and growth funding received in advance from West Sussex County Council.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

18. Creditors: amounts falling due in over one year	2024	2023
	£000	£000
Other creditors	332	350
	332	350

19. Creditors: amounts falling due in over 5 years	2024	2023
	£000	£000
Other creditors	86	89
	86	89

The balances above relate to a loan from CIF which is a low interest loan for a capital condition improvement project.

20. Funds

Restricted Fixed Asset Funds

Represents the value of fixed assets held by the Academy Trust, with the exception of funds either of an inherently capital nature, or allocated by the governing body for future capital spend, that remain unspent at the year end.

The difference of £302,000 between the fixed asset fund and the value of tangible fixed assets represents unspent SCA & DFC funding.

Transfers

These relate to monies spent from unrestricted funds to purchase capitalised assets during the year and from unrestricted funds to GAG to support and enhance the quality of the education provided by the trust beyond that facilitated by core GAG funding.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

20. Funds

	Balance at 31-Aug-23 £000	Incoming Resources £000	Resources Expended £000	Gains, losses & transfers £000	Balance at 31-Aug-24 £000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	19,049	(20,620)	1,571	-
UIFSM	-	246	(246)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	625	(625)	-	-
Other DfE/ ESFA income	-	1,582	(1,582)	-	-
Other voluntary income (restricted)	-	1,431	(1,431)	-	-
Pension reserve	-	(238)	(116)	354	-
	-	22,695	(24,620)	1,925	-
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Fixed assets donated on conversion	30,001	32,423	(1,242)	-	61,182
Fixed asset additions	363	-	-	-	362
DfE/ESFA capital grants	7,770	1,139	-	-	8,909
Capital expenditure from GAG / unrestricted funds	288	-	-	-	288
	38,422	33,562	(1,242)		70,742
Total restricted funds	38,422	56,257	(25,862)		70,742
Unrestricted funds					
Unrestricted funds	919	1,757	(411)	(1,571)	694
Total unrestricted funds	919	1,757	411	(1,571)	694
Total funds	39,341	58,014	(26,273)	354	71,436

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

20. Funds (continued)

	Balance at 31-Aug-22 £000	Incoming Resources £000	Resources Expended £000	Gains, losses & transfers £000	Balance at 31-Aug-23 £000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	11,865	(12,650)	796	-
UIFSM	-	130	(130)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	393	(393)	-	-
Other DfE/ ESFA income	-	736	(736)	-	-
Other voluntary income (restricted)	-	765	(765)	-	-
Pension reserve	-	(108)	(187)	295	-
	-	13,781	(14,871)	1,090	-
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Fixed assets donated on conversion	26,788	3,676	(463)	-	30,001
Fixed asset additions	408	-	-	(45)	363
DfE/ESFA capital grants	7,187	583	-	-	7,770
Capital expenditure from GAG / unrestricted funds	288	-	-	-	288
	34,671	4,259	(463)	(45)	38,422
Total restricted funds	34,671	18,040	(15,334)	1,045	38,422
Unrestricted funds					
Unrestricted funds	838	1,240	(409)	(750)	919
Total unrestricted funds	838	1,240	(409)	(750)	919
Total funds	35,509	19,280	(15,743)	295	39,341

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

20. Funds (continued)

Analysis of academies by fund balance

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were allocated as follows:

	Total
	£000
Billingshurst Primary Academy	(61)
Chichester Free School	168
Northlands Wood Primary Academy	(26)
Woodgate Primary Academy	54
Warden Park Primary Academy	123
Warden Park Secondary Academy	436
Central Trust	-
Total before fixed assets and pension reserve	694
Restricted fixed asset fund	70,742
Pension reserve	-
Total	71,436

There are two academies currently showing in deficit. For Northlands Wood Primary Academy, the budget for 2024-25 eliminates this deficit through managing costs. Billingshurst Primary Academy is newly converted and there is a multi-year plan to return it to a balanced position whilst addressing standards as it is currently OFSTED rated double RI.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

20. Funds (continued)

	Teaching & Educational support staff costs	Other support staff costs	Educational supplies	Other costs (excluding depreciation)	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Billingshurst Primary Academy	643	88	18	96	845
Chichester Free School	4,713	611	294	671	6,289
Northlands Wood Primary Academy	1,790	140	37	293	2,260
Woodgate Primary Academy	757	66	29	136	988
Warden Park Primary Academy	2,039	199	99	162	2,499
Warden Park Secondary Academy	7,113	1,223	489	1,647	10,472
Central Trust	359	537	-	784	1,680
Academy Trust	17,414	2,864	966	3,789	25,033

21. Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 are represented by:

	Unrestricted general funds	Restricted general funds	Restricted fixed asset funds	Total funds
	£000	£000	£000	2024
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	70,441	70,441
Current assets	694	2,902	301	3,897
Current liabilities	-	(2,570)	-	(2,570)
Non-current liabilities	-	(332)	-	(332)
Pension scheme liability	-	-	-	-
Total net assets	694	-	70,742	71,436

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

21. Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Fund balances at 31 August 2023
are represented by:

	Unrestricted general funds £000	Restricted general funds £000	Restricted fixed asset funds £000	Total funds 2023 £000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	38,231	38,231
Current assets	919	1,982	191	3,092
Current liabilities	-	(1,632)	-	(1,632)
Non-current liabilities	-	(350)	-	(350)
Pension scheme liability	-	-	-	-
Total net assets	919	-	38,422	39,341

22 Capital commitments

	2024 £000	2023 £000
Contracted for, but not provided in the financial statements	-	-

23 Financial commitments

Operating leases

The charitable company had the following future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases for each of the following periods:

	2024 £000	2023 £000
Due not later than one year	511	285
Due between 1 and 5 years	756	655
Due more than 5 years	-	-
	1,267	940

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
24 Reconciliation of net income to net cash inflow from operating activities		
Net income / (expenditure)	31,739	3,537
Depreciation (note 14)	1,157	462
Capital grants from the ESFA	(1,139)	(583)
Fixed assets inherited on conversion	(32,398)	(3,643)
Defined benefit liability inherited on conversion	238	108
Decrease / (Increase) in stock	-	2
(Increase) / Decrease in debtors	(924)	(101)
Increase / (Decrease) in creditors	920	871
FRS 102 Pension cost	(9)	138
FRS 102 Pension interest cost	127	49
Net cash inflow from operating activities	(289)	840
	2024	2023
	£000	£000
25 Returns on investments and servicing of finance		
Interest received	-	-
Net cash inflow from returns on investment and servicing of finance	-	-
	2024	2023
	£000	£000
26 Capital expenditure and financial investment		
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(969)	(1,186)
Capital grants from DfE/ESFA/ LA	1,139	583
Net cash outflow from capital expenditure and financial investment	170	(603)

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

27	Analysis of changes in net funds	At 1		At 31
		September	Cash flows	August
		2023	2024	2024
		£000	£000	£000
	Cash in hand and at bank	1,839	(119)	1,720
		1,839	(119)	1,720
			2024	2023
			£000	£000
28	Financial instruments		1,786	1,866
	Financial assets measured at amortised cost		1,950	1,415
	Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost			

Financial assets measured at amortised cost comprise cash at bank, trade debtors and other debtors.

Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost comprise other loans, trade creditors, other creditors and accruals.

29 Contingent Liabilities

Sussex Learning Trust Limited had no contingent liabilities as at 31 August 2024 (2023: nil).

30 Members' Liability

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

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

31 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 West Sussex County Council. Both are multi-employer defined-benefit schemes.

The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was 31 March 2016 and of the LGPS 31 March 2016.

Contributions amounting to £461,000 (2023 £242,000) were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2024 and are included in creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. Membership is automatic for teachers in academies. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment. The TPS is an unfunded scheme to which both the member and employer makes contributions, as a percentage of salary - these contributions are credited to the Exchequer. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2016. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 5 March 2019. The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

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

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

31 Pension and similar obligations (continued)

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

The pension costs paid to TPS in the period amounted to £2,618,000 (2023: £1,469,000).

A copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation is on the Teachers' Pensions website. Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The trust has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The trust has set out above the information available on the scheme.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined-benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £1,002,000 (2023:£720,000) of which employer's contributions totalled £908,000 (2023: £567,000) and employees' contributions totalled £229,000 (2023: £153,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 20.15% for employers and between 5.5% and 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 Trust closure, outstanding Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013.

Principal Actuarial Assumptions	At 31 August 2024	At 31 August 2023
Rate of increase in salaries	4.15%	4.50%
Rate of increase for pensions	2.65%	3.00%
Discount rate	5.00%	5.20%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums	50% - 75%	50% - 75%

Sussex Learning Trust

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Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

31 Pension and similar obligations (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

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

	At 31 August 2024	At 31 August 2023
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	18.7	20.0
Females	24.1	24.8
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	22.3	21.9
Females	25.5	25.4
	Fair value at 31 August 2024 £000	Fair value at 31 August 2023 £000
Equities	8,689	5,638
Bonds	5,149	3,298
Property	1,931	1,489
Cash	322	213
Total market value of assets	16,091	10,638

The actual return on the scheme assets was £714,000 (2023: £481,000).

The expected rates of return are set equal to the discount rate.

Sussex Learning Trust

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Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

Total expenditure recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
Current service cost (net of employee contributions)	762	690
Past service cost	-	-
Total operating charge	762	690

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

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
At 1 September	8,906	9,758
Transfer on conversion	2,558	224
Current service cost	762	690
Interest cost	587	432
Employee contributions	229	153
Actuarial (gains) / losses	(35)	(2,222)
Benefits paid	(142)	(129)
Past service costs including curtailments	-	-
At 31 August	12,865	8,906

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
Opening fair value of fair value of employer assets	8,906	9,758
Transfer on conversion	3,100	116
Interest income	714	481
Return on plan assets	(715)	(2,025)
Actuarial gains / (losses)	-	-
Employer contributions	773	552
Employee contributions	229	153
Benefits paid	(142)	(129)
At 31 August	12,865	8,906

In accordance with FRS 102, a potential asset of £3,226,000 (2023: £1,732,000) has not been recognised as the Trustees do not consider this to be recoverable.

Sussex Learning Trust
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Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

32 Related Party Transactions

Owing to the nature of the Academy Trust's operations and the composition of the Board of Trustees being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, it is inevitable that transactions will take place with organisations in which a member of the Board of Trustees may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the Academy's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures. There are no related party transactions in the year (2023: nil).

33 Chichester Free School transfer of existing academy into the Trust

On 1 September 2023, all the operations and assets and liabilities of Chichester Free School were transferred to Sussex Learning Trust from Sussex Education Trust for £nil consideration. The transfer has been accounted for as a combination that is in substance a gift. The assets and liabilities transferred were valued at their fair value and recognised in the balance sheet under the appropriate headings with a corresponding net amount recognised as a net gain in the Statement of Financial Activities as Donations – transfer in.

The following table sets out the fair values of the identifiable assets and liabilities transferred and an analysis of their recognition in the SOFA.

	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted General Funds £000	Restricted Fixed Asset Funds £000	Total £000
Tangible fixed assets				
Leasehold land and buildings	-	-	27,407	27,407
Other tangible fixed assets	-	-	162	162
Current assets				
Stock	-	1	-	1
Debtors	-	237	-	237
Cash	198	291	17	506
Current liabilities				
Creditors: Amounts due within 1 year		(526)	-	(526)
Non-current liabilities				
LGPS pension deficit	-	-	-	-
	198	3	27,586	27,787

Sussex Learning Trust

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Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

34. Billingshurst Primary School Conversion to an Academy Trust

On 1 June 2024, the Billingshurst Primary School converted to academy status under the Academies Act 2010 and all the operations and assets and liabilities were transferred to Sussex Learning Trust from West Sussex County Council for £nil consideration. The transfer has been accounted for as a combination that is in substance a gift. The assets and liabilities transferred were valued at their fair value and recognised in the balance sheet under the appropriate headings with a corresponding net amount recognised as a net gain in the Statement of Financial Activities as Donations – transfer from local authority on conversion.

The following table sets out the fair values of the identifiable assets and liabilities transferred and an analysis of their recognition in the SOFA.

	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted General Funds £000	Restricted Fixed Asset Funds £000	Total £000
Tangible fixed assets				
Leasehold land and buildings	-	-	4,770	4,770
Other tangible fixed assets	-	-	60	60
Current assets				
Capital reserve on conversion			7	7
Current liabilities				
Revenue deficit on conversion	-	(9)	-	(9)
Non-current liabilities				
LGPS pension deficit	-	(238)	-	(238)
	-	(247)	4,837	4,590