

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST

(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	Mr G Berney Mr D Bull Mr M Hayes Dr J Keeler (resigned 31 August 2023) Mr D Barrs, (appointed 1 September 2022)
Trustees	Mr S Bancroft Mr D Barrs, (appointed Chair of Trust 1st September 2022) Ms C Derbyshire, CEO of the Academy Trust & Executive Headteacher Ms S Dignasse Dr J Keeler (resigned 31 August 2023) Mr J Kerr (resigned 31 March 2023) Mrs J Marshall Mrs L Vincent Mr P Philpott (appointed 1 January 2023) Mr M Clare (appointed 1 September 2023)
Company registered number	07618351
Company name	Saffron Academy Trust
Registered and principal office	Audley End Road Saffron Walden Essex CB11 4UH
Company Secretary	Mr P Wilson
Chief Executive Officer	Ms C Derbyshire
Senior Management Team	Ms C Derbyshire, CEO of the Trust & Executive Headteacher of Saffron Walden County High School Mr T Lawn, Headteacher of Alec Hunter Academy Mrs J Puxley, Executive Headteacher of Katherine Semar Schools Mrs E Vincent, Executive Headteacher of R A Butler Schools Mr P Wilson, Finance Director Ms P Lankester, Headteacher of Saffron Walden County High School Mr J Saunders, Headteacher of Honywood School Mrs C Smyth, Headteacher of Beckers Green Primary School Mrs Jennifer Hone, Headteacher of Helena Romanes Primary School Mrs C Davis, Executive Headteacher of Helena Romanes School (appointed 1st September 2022)

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

Independent Auditors	Price Bailey LLP Chartered Accountants Causeway House 1 Dane Street Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire CM23 3BT
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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the financial statements and Auditor's Report of Saffron Academy Trust for the year ended 31 August 2023. The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' Report, and a Directors' Report under company law.

Saffron Academy Trust (the Charitable Company, SAT or The Trust) currently encapsulates nine Academy Schools, four secondary and five primary Academies (the Schools or the Academies) serving a catchment area in Northwest Essex.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are its primary governing documents. The Trustees of The Charitable Company are also the Directors for the purposes of company law. The terms Trustee and Director are interchangeable. The Charitable Company includes the following Academies:

Academy	Converted on	Joined Trust on	Capacity	Students*
Saffron Walden County High School (SWCHS)	1st June 2011	1st June 2011	2,050	2,135
Alec Hunter Academy (AHA)	1st April 2013	1st April 2013	1,142	1,068
Katherine Semar Junior School (KSJ)	1st December 2014	1st December 2014	270	244
Katherine Semar Infant School (KSI)	1st December 2014	1st December 2014	180	180
R A Butler Junior School (RBJ)	1st November 2010	1st September 2017	360	383
R A Butler Infant School (RBI)	1st November 2010	1st September 2017	270	270
Honywood School (HWD)	1st May 2011	1st September 2019	800	791
Beckers Green School (BGS)	1st September 2020	1st September 2020	364	310
Helena Romanes School (HRS)	1st April 2012	1st September 2020	1,593	1,370
*October 2023 census			7,029	6,751

The operation of the Academies and employment of staff are the responsibility of the Trustees. The Trust retains control of Academy budgets and finances, and monitors these through its Resources Committee. Throughout this report the Board of Trustees is referred to as the Main Governing Body (MGB). Each Academy has an appointed Local Governing Body (LGB) approved by the Trust Board, who have delegated authority from the Trust to administer their Academy within agreed budgets. Within this Report the term Trustee or Director refers to a member of the MGB and the term Governor to a member of an LGB. Details of the Trustees who served during the year are included in the Reference and Administrative Details section.

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.

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Trustees and Officers' Indemnities

In accordance with normal commercial practice the Trust has purchased insurance to protect Trustees, Governors and Officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Trust business. The insurance provides cover up to £5,000,000 on any one claim and details of the costs are disclosed in Note 12 to the accounts.

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

The arrangements are as set out in the Articles and Funding Agreement.

Trustees are appointed for a fixed term of four years, ex-officio post holders excepted. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is an ex officio member of the MGB as is the chair of Saffron Educational Trust (SET). Other Trustees are elected to office or appointed if there are insufficient candidates offering themselves for election. The Articles of Association make provision for the Members to appoint up to nine Trustees. Additionally, the sitting Trustees may agree to co-opt such other Trustees as they see fit. The number of Trustees who are also employees is limited to one third of the total number. At the date of approval of this Report, the Directors of SET are D Barrs, C Derbyshire, M Hayes, P Lankester and L Vincent.

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees and Governors

The Trust is committed to providing adequate opportunities for Trustees and Governors to undertake and receive suitable training to enable them to perform their role effectively.

To this end, The Trust links with a number of local training providers and new Trustees and Governors are required to attend a training programme. The induction programme would involve a tour of the relevant Academy School, meetings with students and staff and provision of policy and procedures documents that are appropriate to their role with particular emphasis on the committee work that they will undertake. All Trustees and Governors have access to the Trust's membership of the National Governors Association.

Organisational Structure

The governance of the Trust is defined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association together with the Funding Agreement with the Department of Education.

The MGB, meets on at least three occasions per year with Trustees also attending its two sub committees Resources (including Finance) and Standards. In total, Trustees meet at least six times a year with some meeting nine times a year.

The MGB is responsible for the strategic direction of the Trust. The Trustees are responsible for setting strategic policy, adopting an annual plan and budget, monitoring the Trust by the use of those budgets and making major decisions about the direction of the Trust, capital expenditure and senior staff appointments.

The Governors within their LGB's are responsible for implementing strategic policy, maintaining and improving education standards and safeguarding, ensuring that annual budgets align with the desired curriculum, monitoring variances and holding the Headteacher and SLT to account.

The Senior Leadership Teams (SLT's) control the Academies at an executive level implementing policies and reporting to their LGB. Each SLT is responsible for the day-to-day operation of their Academy, in particular organising staff, resources and students. They are responsible for the authorisation of spending within agreed budgets and for the appointment of staff following vetting and safeguarding recruitment processes.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) and the wider SAT Executive group look across the Trust and align local SLT and LGB activity with the strategic aims of the Trust as a whole. All changes to SLT structures are subject to the approval of the Trust's CEO and Accounting Officer.

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Arrangements for Setting Pay and Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

Pay and remuneration of key management personnel is aligned with industry standard pay scales and nationally agreed pay awards. Each School has delegated powers at the LGB level to review their employee's remuneration via an appointed subcommittee. All amendments to central services employee's and key management's pay and remuneration are approved by the appropriate sub-committee and ratified by the MGB. In setting remuneration levels, the Trust considers contributory factors such as experience, ability to recruit and retain and the scope and complexity of the role, all of which are in accordance with the Trust's appointment and pay policies.

Trade union facility time	Employees
Employees who were relevant union officials	11
Full time equivalent	10.86
Percentage of time spent on facility time in the range 1%-50%	9
Total Trust pay bill	£35.46m
Cost of facility time	£6,750
Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time	0%

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

Owing to the nature of the Trust's operations and the composition of the Board of Trustees being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, it is inevitable that from time-to-time transactions will take place with organisations in which Trustees may have an interest. The Trust maintains a register of such interests and there is a standing agenda item on all MGB and LGB meetings for attendees to declare any changes and furthermore, any potential conflicts with agenda items. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the Trust's financial regulations and normal procedures. Any transaction where the Trustee may have a pecuniary interest is only undertaken in accordance with the 'at cost' principle described in the Academy Trust Handbook.

The Trust cooperated with the following organisation during the academic year in pursuit of its charitable activities:

- The School Games Organiser works with PE staff at local primary schools to increase participation in physical education and sports programmes outside the curriculum.

The Trust reports the following related parties by nature of common Directors or Trustees:

- Saffron Educational Trust (SET) owns the freehold of the Saffron Walden County High School site and is effectively this Academy's landlord.
- Saffron Walden County High School Trust administers a modest trust fund whose source of income is generated from private donations. This Trust makes donations for specific SWCHS projects.
- Saffron Hall Trust (SHT) manages the arts and music offering to the public. It is a separate commercial venture that works closely with SWCHS to manage the concert hall space outside of normal school hours. In furthering the aim of achieving best value for money both SAT and SHT share some costs.

Saffron Academy Trust does not have a formal sponsor.

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Engagement with Employees (Including disabled persons)

The Trustees recognise that our employees are fundamental and core to our business and delivery of high quality education. Our success depends on attracting, retaining and motivating these employees. The Trustees factor the implications of decisions on employees and the wider workforce, where relevant and feasible. Where appropriate, the Trust consults on matters such as policy, pay, health, safety and welfare with the relevant support staff and teaching trade unions.

The Trust provides information to employees generally by way of email, memoranda and staff meetings. Information is channelled via leadership meetings and staff briefings. Employees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with Ofsted reports, available from the Trust website and student progress and attainment statistics, when they are made available.

Applications for employment by disabled persons are given full and fair consideration for all vacancies in accordance with their particular aptitude and abilities. In the event of employees becoming disabled then every effort is made to retrain them in order that their employment within the Trust may continue.

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

The Trustees have implemented clear policies and procedures for dealing fairly with suppliers. Formal orders are placed and agreed payment terms always adhered to. To ensure service continuity the Trust continues to follow the guidelines of the Government Procurement Policy Note (PPN) that set out information and guidance for public bodies on payment of their suppliers.

The Trustees consider pupils and parents to be their “customers”. Whilst pupils encounter engagement on a daily basis, engagement with parents is carried out through regular newsletters, electronic platforms and face to face meetings.

Objectives and Activities Objects and Aims

The principal object and aim of the Charitable Company is the operation of a number of Academies to provide free education and care for pupils of different abilities within its local community between the ages of 3 and 19. We firmly believe that every child deserves to go to a great school.

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

Saffron Academy Trust continues to develop a local family of Schools that aspire to provide state education of exceptional quality for their communities.

The following aims arise from that vision:

- Educational provision which enables pupils and young people, aged 3-19, of all abilities to fulfil their academic potential and achieve their personal best.
- A curriculum across all key stages which promotes excellence in the arts and sciences.
- Teaching and learning which is highly engaging and geared to students making excellent progress through the key stages.
- Transition between key stages (especially key stage 2 to key stage 3) which delivers outstanding continuity of learning.
- A focus on developing all professionals to deliver the highest quality of teaching to all our learners.
- Schooling which is outward looking and allows students to interact with ideas and people from around the world.

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- To engage with our stakeholders' attitudes towards a more sustainable manner of operating and reducing the Trusts carbon footprint where possible.
- Educational research into factors underpinning successful schools and highly effective learning.
- Involvement with the local area in a way that promotes community cohesion and cultural excellence especially with regard to music and the arts.

During the year the Trust has worked towards these aims by:

- Continuing to provide Directors of School Improvement covering both Secondary and Primary Schools;
- Continued to improve the Mathematics curriculum and teaching across the Trust via White Rose Maths;
- Continued support of curriculum specialist leaders in Modern Foreign Languages and Science to improve curriculum delivery and teaching throughout the Trust;
- Continued the provision of Specialist Leaders in Education to provide CPD to teachers across a number of subjects in Schools within the Trust;
- The Trust continued to develop and expand its Teaching School Hub offering with the Early Careers Framework, NPQS and partnership with the CTSN SCITT;
- Continuing to change the culture of Schools so that they focus on the progress of all children;
- Continuing to put emphasis on student progress in targets set, intervention and monitoring;

Continuing to improve teaching, assessment, and leadership at all levels throughout the Trust; and our success in fulfilling our aims can be measured by:

- Progress 8 scores at Secondary schools and Key Stage outcomes at Primary schools;
- Improved Ofsted reports overall and component gradings, every SAT school is graded good or better;
- Financial recovery of schools managing challenging budgets.

Public Benefit

The Trustees believe that by working towards the objects and aims of the Trust as detailed above, they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.

Strategic Report

Achievements and Performance

In 2022-23, despite some continuing disruption and staff and pupil absence due to Covid 19, Saffron Academy Trust continued in its mission to ensure that pupils achieved their potential in their final assessments; encouraged as wide a range of extra-curricular activities as was possible; developed and retained well-qualified and suitable staff and guided students to appropriate progression routes when they left their Academy. A standard set of national examinations returned in 2023 which meant that the highest grades were controlled and depressed at a national level so that they fell more in line with those in 2019. All schools continued to be impacted by higher than usual levels of pupil absence although this is an improving picture. It was an excellent year for achievement in Ofsted inspections. All schools improved on their previous fine gradings. At the time of

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writing, SAT has 3 schools graded Outstanding and 6 at Good with 1 of those (RAB Juniors) due for re-inspection to determine whether it is Outstanding.

SWCHS students enjoyed strong results at every level in 2023. At A level, 99.6% of students achieved A* to E grades 86% achieved grades A* to C and 30% were at A*/A. At GCSE, attainment was strong. and 57% achieved a Grade 5+ in both English and Maths which compared to 45% nationally and 44% in Essex. Progress 8 was above national at +0.3.

AHA had a positive year. At GCSE 42.5% achieved a grade 5+ in both English and Maths which was an improvement on 37% in the last comparable year (2019). Its Progress 8 score of -0.16 was better than the -0.33 recorded in 2022 and close to matching its best ever of -0.13 in 2019. Its target remains to achieve positive progress. The strong trend of improvement at the school was recognised by Ofsted in November 2022 who confirmed that it was still a 'Good' school.

Honywood School who joined SAT in September 2019 has continued to enjoy clear improvement since working within the Trust. The school has now achieved improved progress at GCSE. 35% of learners achieved Grade 5 or above in English and Maths and Progress 8 was recorded at -0.26 which compares favourably with 2019 when it sat at -0.36. In December 2022 the school was inspected by Ofsted for the first time since it joined SAT and was graded Good in every category with serious consideration given to Outstanding for Leadership and Management and Personal Development. It now needs to demonstrate a positive P8 score.

Helena Romanes School joined SAT in September 2020. This is a school graded as RI by Ofsted in 2019. Intense school improvement work has been crucial. SAT appointed a new Executive Headteacher in 2022 who has been determined to deliver a Good school for the community. Results in 2023 were very much improved on those in 2019. At A Level 98% of students achieved an A* to E pass, 65% were at A* to C and 17% of grades were at A*/A grade. At GCSE 46% achieved Grade 5+ in English and Maths which was above national and Essex levels. Progress 8 was -0.29 which is the weakest result in SAT, so we were delighted when the school achieved an Ofsted Good grading in all categories in October of the current 2023 academic year.

Our primary aged children continue to outperform other children nationally. At **RAB** at Key Stage 1, the percentage of children meeting age related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths was 73%. 12% of children achieved this at the higher level. At Key Stage 2, 72% (59% nationally) achieved the expected standard in all 3 areas and 24% (8% nationally) of children achieved this at the higher level. In November 2022 the Junior school was inspected by Ofsted and was graded at least Good and possibly Outstanding so it will receive a further inspection within 2 years to confirm if that is the case.

At **Katherine Semar** at Key Stage 1, the percentage of children meeting age related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths was 72%. 18% of children achieved this at the higher level. At Key Stage 2, 83% achieved the expected standard in all 3 areas and 23% of children achieved this at the higher level.

Beckers Green Primary School joined SAT in 2020. At Key Stage 1, the percentage of children meeting age related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths was 50%. 0% of children achieved this at the higher level. At Key Stage 2, 72% achieved the expected standard in all 3 areas and 13% of children achieved this at the higher level. Beckers Green has the highest proportion of lower income and disadvantaged children of any SAT School. In July 2023 it was inspected by Ofsted and graded a Good school with many aspects noted as improved since the last inspection.

The work of the Saffron Teaching School Hub remains a significant and growing dimension to life in the Trust. It has these KPIs:

1. Co-ordination and partnership in Initial Teacher Training
2. Delivery of the Early Careers Framework
3. Acting as an Appropriate Body for accredited courses
4. Delivery of a suite of National Professional Qualifications
5. Delivery of Career Professional Development

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All TSHs have had to apply for redesignation in 2023. Outcomes will be known by March 2024.

Key Performance Indicators

The Trustees receive regular management reports at each committee meeting to enable them to monitor the performance of the Trust compared to its aims, strategies, cashflows and financial budgets. Regular management information reports differentiate between the principal activity of the Trust, that of delivering education to students and other ancillary, or non-principle, activity such as capital projects, after school clubs and school trips etc.

SAT	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Student	Student	Student	Student	Student	Student	Student	Student
	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
Key Stage 1&2	432	1,056	1,041	1,063	1,454	1,443	1,480	1,507
Key Stage 3	1,358	1,342	1,344	1,935	2,629	2,670	2,680	2,692
Key Stage 4	960	891	906	1,292	1,676	1,731	1,748	1,732
Key Stage 5	625	636	651	638	814	786	800	820
Total	3,375	3,925	3,942	4,928	6,573	6,630	6,708	6,751

2017/18 RA Butler joined the Trust – 2019/20 Honywood joined the Trust – 2020/21 Beckers Green and Helena Romanes joined the Trust

Trustees have closely monitored the changes in student numbers over previous years and were aware of the steady decline at Honywood School from 2019-20 as a direct result in changes to bus routes by the Local Authority. Honywood is the direct casualty of this cost cutting initiative and the Trust has responded by implementing a number of strategies to reverse this trend including a reduction in PAN. The Board remain cautiously optimistic that these actions will have the desired effect and the recent October census has again seen an uptick in student numbers that will fund the 2024-25 academic year.

The Trustees are delighted to report that the October 2023 student census for the whole Trust has again increased on a like for like basis.

The Resources Committee monitors the costs for staffing, premises occupancy, administration and curriculum delivery in relation to GAG and other income at both LGB and MGB meetings. Additionally, the MGB Resources Committee receive a range of KPIs based upon student numbers, staff numbers, GAG income and staff costs across all Schools and in aggregation. Whilst these reports and the detailed budget staff cost schedules support the Trust's Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning process the Board recognises that further granular information is required and plans to implement a software system to provide that additional detail.

Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries the Trustees reluctantly submitted to the Department for Education a deficit budget for the 2023-24 year noting the following contributory factors.

- The relatively high cost of energy.
- A significant number of Trust schools receive the minimum per pupil funding.
- The lack of specialist SEN provision within Uttlesford places a burden upon many Trust schools in terms of staff costs as they must cope with disproportionately high levels of SEN within mainstream education.
- The Government's insistence that the Apprenticeship Levy Scheme applies to schools even though trainee teachers are funded elsewhere means that each year the Trust loses £120,000 in levies that revert to the Government if unused.
- For the second successive year support staff costs have risen by a fixed sum per pay point.

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The Trust Board have ethical concerns regarding the choices they are being asked to make in committing the Trust to an increasing cost base that is clearly unsustainable without adequate funding. The Trust Board also remain concerned by the absence of any funding reassurance in the medium term or a clearly defined and expressed long term strategy. Last year, Trustees took action by pooling reserves and approving a revised Trust Reserves Policy. This year, Trustees are focusing on the ratio of staff costs to total income. Following a data gathering exercise the Trustees intend to direct schools to reduce staffing costs in order to reduce the strain on retained reserves. It is envisaged that this will probably result in a significant reduction in the Trusts ability to perform outreach work that benefits education in general.

During the year Trustees monitored the recovery plans put in place at Alec Hunter Academy and are delighted to report that the recovery plan funding provided centrally has been repaid in full. Student numbers continue to climb and Trustees are assuredly confident that the recovery plan has been successful.

During the year and at the behest of the MGB, capital resources were directed at the Helena Romanes School, to alleviate the worst elements of the sites extremely poor condition. The school itself has already been accepted into the Schools Rebuilding Program and together with Local Authority funding a new all through school will be built on a new site opening in 2025. Since joining the trust student headcount has started to improve and the Trustees are confident that the recent Ofsted success and confirmed new school premises will accelerate that trend. The Honywood School has come under significant scrutiny in previous years in an effort to turn its fortunes around. Financially, Honywood has all but depleted its reserves but shows signs of improvement with student headcount showing modest improvement for two successive years. The Trust has already agreed in principle to the provision of a repayable financial recovery plan funded from central reserves.

The MGB acknowledge that funding in education generally and its impact on budgets and reserves remains extremely challenging and are committed to monitoring developments such as energy costs and the increased costs of employing staff. For this reason, the MGB 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.

Promoting the Success of the Charitable Company

The Trustees have an obligation to act in a way most likely to promote the success of the Charitable Company. Details regarding engagement with employees, suppliers, parents, pupils and other connected parties have been covered in separate notes within the Trustees' Report. The obligation to assess the likely consequences of decisions in the longer term is noted within the reserves policy below as Trustees balance the needs of current and future cohorts. In the current economic climate, the latter is felt far more substantially than in previous years.

The Trustees have identified economic, reputational and ethical areas as key risks and their actions in these areas are covered within Principal Risks and Uncertainties later within this Strategic Report.

Financial Review

The principal source of funding for the Trust is the General Annual Grant (GAG) and other grants that it receives from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). For the year ended 31 August 2023 the Trust received £50,433,605 of GAG and other income. A high percentage of this income is spent on wages and salaries and support costs to deliver the Trust's primary objective of the provision of education. During the year the Trust incurred expenditure of £52,882,958. The Trust brought forward from 2022/23, £283,908 restricted funds and £2,616,485 unrestricted funding. The carry forward for 2023/24 is £271,908 restricted funding and £2,425,878 unrestricted funding.

Due to the accounting rules for the Local Government Pension Scheme under FRS102, the Trust is recognising a pension fund deficit of £277,000 (2022: £3,601,000). This does not mean that an immediate liability for this amount crystallises and such a deficit generally results in a cash flow effect in the form of increased employer contributions over a number of years.

The results for the Trust for the year are displayed in the table below:

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	Restricted General Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Fixed Asset Fund	Pension Reserve	Total
Donation on transfer/conversion					-
Incoming Resources	41,359,600	2,593,251	6,480,754	-	50,433,605
Resources Expended	(41,371,600)	(2,783,858)	(6,073,249)		(50,228,707)
LGPS Charge				(2,242,000)	(2,242,000)
Depreciation			(2,323,251)		(2,323,251)
Employer contributions paid				1,911,000	1,911,000
Total Resources Expended	(41,371,600)	(2,783,858)	(8,396,500)	(331,000)	(52,882,958)
Assets Purchased from GAG	-	-	-		-
Actuarial Gains				3,655,000	3,655,000
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	(12,000)	(190,607)	(1,915,746)	3,324,000	1,205,647
Balance at 1 September 2022	283,908	2,616,485	59,191,285	(3,601,000)	58,490,678
Balance at 31 August 2023	271,908	2,425,878	57,275,539	(277,000)	59,696,325

Reserves Policy

The Trustees are aware of the requirement to balance current and future needs and always aim to set a balanced budget with annual income balancing annual expenditure however this year that has not been possible. The Trustees monitor projected year-end carry forward figures via the monthly reports from central finance. The budget plan identifies how any carry forward will be allocated in the plan for the following academic year, including the identification of any funds earmarked for a specific project or purpose.

The cash balance of the Trust has been healthy all year, ending the year with a balance of £8,101,191. After the effect of liabilities and other current assets, the Trust's current level of free reserves (total funds less the amount held in fixed assets and restricted funds) is £2,425,878. This has been built up from a mixture of locally raised income and balances transferred from the predecessor Schools.

During the year the Trustees took the decision to substantially centralise reserves in response to the DfE's directive to utilise reserves in absorbing increased staff and energy costs. The Trust's Reserves Policy has been re-written and approved by the Trust Board whilst also integrating Capital Expenditure policy. The policy makes clear that reserves are the sole prerogative of the Trustee Board irrespective of wherever they may be housed across the Trust.

The Trustees monitor cash flow as part of the monthly finance reports and in line with the recently revised Reserves Policy they attempt to hold a liquidity buffer to cover short term cash flow variances at a school level. As part of the budget process the Trustees are informed as to the cash impacts of the budgets they authorise and the LGB committees currently receive regular cash flow forecasts for their individual Schools.

Outlook

This year has seen a high number of Essex schools impacted by the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). All schools within the Trust have been assessed and we have three schools that are affected. Both Katherine Semar schools have identified RAAC but there are documented mitigations in place in the form of metal bracing structures. These structures have an estimated thirty-year lifespan, and we are nearing that expiry date. In accordance with Essex LA guidelines the Trust has requested more detailed analysis and will be performing quarterly inspections of the structure. In addition, the unpredictability of energy costs and further increasing staff costs via decisions made by central Government give rise to serious concerns. The impact of

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these events on the cost base are outside of the direct control of Trustees, who acknowledge that Trust finances are likely to be turbulent and less predictable in forthcoming years. The Trustees in executing their obligation to maintain and improve the Trust's building infrastructure are aware that future maintenance and refurbishment requires planned adequate funding. Whilst Trustees have previously declined to deplete historical cash reserves given the events outside of their control the Trustees reluctantly accept that the Trust will be unable to retain reasonable levels of reserves to fully support future expenditure such as the expected ancillary costs associated with the relocation of Helena Romanes School and the anticipated recovery plan for Honywood School.

Investment Policy

The aim of the policy is to ensure funds that the Trust does not immediately need to cover anticipated expenditure are invested to maximise its income but with minimal risk. The Trustees do not consider the investment of surplus funds as a primary activity but rather, as good stewardship, as and when circumstances allow. The central finance function coordinates this activity with all the Schools in the Trust.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trust works with the LGB's in maintaining a central risk register identifying the major risks, to which each Academy is exposed, and identifying actions and procedures to mitigate those risks.

This register is approved and monitored by the MGB via the Finance Sub-Committee and a more independent review by the Audit Committee typically undertaken on an annual basis. The internal control systems and the exposure to identified risks are monitored on behalf of the Trustees at each Audit Committee meeting. The principal risks facing the Trust are outlined below; those facing the Academies at an operational level are addressed by its systems and by internal financial and other controls. The Trustees report that the Trust's financial and internal controls conform to guidelines issued by the ESFA, and that improvements to the wider framework of systems dealing with business risk and risk management strategy continue to be made and formally documented.

The Trustees recognise that systems can only provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that major risks have been adequately managed. To address this, the Audit Committee appointed Scrutton Bland LLP to carry out a rolling program of reviews on governance controls, processes and procedures. This year independent internal audit reviews took place on Governance, Health & Safety and Payroll.

The Trust takes advantage of the managed offering from Essex Local Authority on GDPR matters and Trustees are pleased to report that all Schools have been audited, assessed and awarded the highest rating.

As a group of academy schools, the level of financial risk is relatively low. In normal circumstances cash flows can be reliably forecast, monitored and reported. Staff costs make up the majority of expenditure and are usually relatively stable with contingencies in place to cover such items as sickness and maternity. However, financial risk is increasing given the circumstances outlined above and is the preeminent risk on the Trusts risk register.

The Trustees assess the other principal risks and uncertainties facing the Trust as follows:

- Schools being unable to set balanced budgets and in year deficits then significantly over utilise cash reserves.
- An uncontrollable health event (pandemic) occurs that has an adverse impact on the Trust's Schools e.g. closure, high staff & pupil absences, inability to purchase resources, loss of income, detrimental impact on learning etc.
- Capital Expenditure requests submitted by LGBs are out of step with available central funds.
- Information security risk that may result in a sensitive data breach or successful ransomware attack.
- Failure in governance and/or management – resulting in the potential failure to effectively manage the

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

Trust's finances, internal controls, compliance with regulations and legislation, statutory returns, etc.

The Trustees continue to review and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate these risks;

- Reputational: the continuing success of the individual Academies is dependent on their ability to continue in attracting student applications in sufficient numbers by maintaining the highest educational standards. To mitigate this risk Trustees ensure that student progress and outcomes are closely monitored and reviewed;
- Safeguarding and child protection: the Trustees continue to ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the areas of selection and monitoring of staff, the operation of child protection policies and procedures, health & safety and discipline;
- Staffing: the success of the Academies is reliant on the quality of its staff and the Trustees monitor and review policies and procedures and recruitment to ensure continued development and training of staff as well as ensuring there is clear succession planning;
- Fraud and mismanagement of funds: At the request of the Audit Committee the Trust has appointed Scrutton Bland LLP to carry out independent and external checks on financial systems and processes as required by the Academy Trust Handbook. All finance staff receive training to keep up to date with financial practice requirements and develop their skills in this area;
- Cyber security: The Trust has engaged in a program of data and key systems migration into the cloud. This work is ongoing but should offer protection from complete data loss. Additionally, the annual staff training regime now covers a mandatory cyber security module with periodic tests of staff by email.
- Investments: financial instruments – the Trust only deals with bank balances and cash deposits. The risk in this area is considered to be low;
- Pensions: defined benefit pension liability – as the Government has agreed to meet the defined benefit pension liability of any Academy ceasing to exist the main risk to the Trust is an annual cash flow funding of part of the deficit. Trustees take these payments into account when setting the annual budget plan.

The Trust and each Academy continue to strengthen the risk management process throughout the year by improving those processes and ensuring staff awareness.

Fundraising

The Trust only held small fundraising events during the year organised at individual Schools including non-uniform days, Christmas shows, theatrical productions, film nights, cake sales and quiz nights. The Trust does not work with professional fundraisers or companies who carry out fundraising on its behalf. During the year, no complaints or issues have arisen as a result of the fundraising events.

Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting

UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

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

Total energy consumption (kWh)	11,659,647
Energy consumption break down (kWh)	
• gas,	5,907,298
• electricity,	5,712,526
• transport fuel - owned transport	11,809
• transport fuel - employee vehicles	28,014
Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e	
Gas consumption	1,082.00
Owned transport – mini-buses	1,208.00
Total scope 1	2,290.00
Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e	
Electricity	1,213.00
Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e	
Business travel in employee owned vehicles	6.9
Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e	3,509.90
Intensity ratio	
Number of pupils	6610
Tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.53

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 2020 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 Trust has installed smart meters across all sites;
- Centralised energy procurement allowing for the collection of data to assist in energy reduction initiatives;
- The Trust engaged with de-carbonisation funding initiatives successfully applied for funding to install LED lighting in Schools across the Trust and voltage reduction initiatives;
- Work practices have changed with increased video conferencing for staff meetings and increased flexible

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

working strategies has reduced the need for travel between sites;

- Each School has appointed an energy saving champion to identify and implement consumption reducing strategies;
- Trust directives on building shutdowns over Christmas have been issued, school heating cycles have been revised and central IT have implemented revised auto shut down procedures for computers.

Plans for Future Periods

The Trust will continue striving to improve the levels of performance of its students at all levels and will attempt to maintain its recent progress in ensuring the number of students on roll properly reflects the demand for places. The Trustees intend to enhance and expand facilities in pursuance of the Trusts' commitment to ensure that all students achieve their potential.

The Trustees recognise that students with differing abilities and aptitudes will have differing curriculum requirements and that a greater diversity of learning environments will be required to deliver these. The Trust continues to seek further opportunities to engage with local schools, primarily within North West Essex, with the ultimate aim of expanding its family of schools of exceptional quality. During the year the Trust received a number of enquiries and some of those discussions remain ongoing.

Funds Held as Custodian Trustee on Behalf of Others

The Trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 Bursary Funds from the ESFA. Payments received from the ESFA and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the Statement of Financial Activities incorporating Income and Expenditure Account, as the Trust does not have control over the charitable application of the funds. For further details please refer to Note 28 to the financial statements.

Estates Management

The Trustees are mindful of, and actively implementing the recommendations set out in the ESFA Good Estates Management Guide as a tool to assess and mitigate risks associated with the management of the Trust's estate.

Auditor

Insofar as the Trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the Charitable Company's Auditor is unaware; and
- The Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Auditor is aware of that information.

The Trustees' Report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by the Board of Trustees on 19 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Mr D Barrs
Chair of Trustees

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of responsibility

As Trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Saffron Academy 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.

As Trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook and Competency framework for governance. We note that the Trusts compliance with the Handbook is regularly and independently assessed by internal audit reviews which included Risk Management and Governance Overview this year.

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Saffron Academy 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 supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has formally met 5 times during the year. The Board met fewer than six times during the year. The Board is satisfied that through the use of sub-committees it maintains effective oversight of funds. There are two sub committees with responsibilities for Resources (including finance) and Standards; meeting materials for both sub committees are issued to all Trustees, all of whom are welcome to attend any meeting. Details of one such sub-committee are noted below.

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

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Mr S Bancroft	5	5
Mr D Barrs, (appointed Chair of Trust 1st September 2022)	5	5
Ms C Derbyshire, CEO of the Academy Trust & Executive Headteacher	5	5
Ms S Dignasse	5	5
Dr J Keeler	4	5
Mr J Kerr	2	3
Mrs J Marshall	4	5
Mrs L Vincent	4	5
Mr P Sinnott	3	3
Mr P Philpott	3	3
Mr M Clare (Appointed 1 September 2023)	0	0

The Trust's Governance structure has been independently reviewed this year as part of internal process to assess if structure and process could be improved by change and to strengthen compliance with ESFA guidance. Trustees always seek appropriate legal advice on the subject as Schools join the Trust. The Trust Board recognise that it needs to recruit additional Trustees and actions are in progress to achieve this.

Conflict of interests are managed through the following controls:

- All Trustees, Members and Governors are required to complete an annual declaration of interests for inclusion into the Trusts Register of interests.
- At all meetings there is a standing agenda item requesting attendees to declare any changes to their declarations and any potential conflicts with tabled agenda items.

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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Governance (continued)

- Any related party transactions are submitted to the ESFA
- Trustees with a declared conflict of interest are not involved in any procurement or decision making process pertaining to that conflict

Finance matters are addressed by the Resources Committee, a subcommittee of the MGB, with delegated authority to act on its behalf. However, all meeting materials are distributed to all Trustees and meeting minutes are presented to the MGB at full Board meetings.

Attendance during the year at meetings was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Mr D Barrs	3	3
Ms C Derbyshire	3	3
Mr J Kerr	1	2
Mr S Bancroft	3	3
Mr P Philpott	0	2
Ms C Sleep (Non Trustee)	3	3

Review of value for money

As Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive Officer has responsibility for ensuring that the Trust delivers value for money 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 appropriate. The Accounting Officer has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- Successful planning appeal for 200 houses on the Helena Romanus existing site generating circa £5m extra revenue for the DfE to apply to the replacement build.
- Initiating the sale of the existing Helena Romanes site.
- Changing the HR services provider to improve the service.

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 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 Saffron Academy Trust for the year 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and financial statements.

Capacity to handle risk

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board of Trustees is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Trust's significant risks that has been in place for the year 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

The risk and control framework

The 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 Resources Committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines; and
- identification and management of risks.

The Board of Trustees has decided to employ Scrutton Bland LLP as internal auditor.

The Internal Auditor's role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the Trust's financial systems. In particular, the checks carried out in the current period included:

- Health & Safety
- Trust Governance
- Payroll

The Internal Auditor reports to the Board of Trustees through the Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Trustees' financial responsibilities. On an annual basis, the Chair of the Audit Committee attends a meeting of the Trust Board.

The Internal Auditor has delivered their schedule of work as planned and there were no material control issues arising as a result of their work.

Review of effectiveness

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

- discharge of the Board of Trustees financial decisions to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress
- the work of the Internal Auditor;
- the work of the External Auditors;
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process; and
- the work of the executive managers within the Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework

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

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 19 December 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Mr D Barrs
Chair of Trustees

Ms C Derbyshire
Accounting Officer

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STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

As Accounting Officer of Saffron Academy Trust I have considered my responsibility to notify the Board of Trustees and the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding received by the Trust, under the funding agreement in place between the 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.

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

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

Ms C Derbyshire
Accounting Officer
Date: 19 December 2023

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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

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

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

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

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

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

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

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 19 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Mr D Barrs
Chair of Trustees

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF
SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST**

Opinion

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

In our opinion the financial statements:

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

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF
SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST (CONTINUED)**

Other information

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, 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 Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the Trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF
SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST (CONTINUED)**

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Trust and the sector in which it operates and considered the risk of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included those regulations directly related to the financial statements, including financial reporting and tax legislation and academy sector regulations including GDPR, employment law, health and safety and safeguarding.

The risks were discussed with the audit team and we remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit. We carried out specific procedures to address the risks identified. These included the following:

- We reviewed systems and procedures to identify potential areas of management override risk. In particular, we carried out testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, and evaluating the business rationale of any large or unusual transactions to determine whether they were significant to our assessment.
- We reviewed key controls, authorisation procedures and decision making processes for any unusual or one-off transactions.
- We reviewed minutes of Trustee meetings and other relevant sub-committees of the Board and agreed the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation.
- We have made enquiries of the Accounting Officer and senior management team to identify laws and regulations applicable to the Trust. We assessed details of any breaches where applicable in order to assess the impact upon the Trust.
- We have reviewed any correspondence with the ESFA / DfE and the procedures in place for the reporting of incidents to the Trustees including reporting of any serious incidents to the Regulator if necessary.

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.

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF
SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST (CONTINUED)**

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

Use of our Report

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

Tom Meeks FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of

Price Bailey LLP
Chartered Accountants
Causeway House
1 Dane Street
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 3BT

20 December 2023

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

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 29 September 2023 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Saffron Academy Trust during the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Respective responsibilities of Saffron Academy Trust's Accounting Officer and the Reporting Accountant

The Accounting Officer is responsible, under the requirements of Saffron Academy Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 28 April 2011 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2022, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Approach

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

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

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

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

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- An assessment of the risk of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance
- Consideration and corroboration of the evidence supporting the Accounting Officer's statement on regularity, propriety and compliance and how the Trust complies with the framework of authorities.
- Evaluation of the general control environment of the Trust, extending the procedures required for financial statements to include regularity, propriety and compliance
- Discussions with and representations from the Accounting Officer and other key management personnel.
- An extension of substantive testing from our audit of the financial statements to cover matters pertaining to regularity, in order to support the regularity conclusion, including governance, internal controls, procurement and the application of income.

Conclusion

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

Reporting Accountant
Price Bailey LLP
Chartered Accountants

Date: 20 December 2023

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants:	2					
Other		27,877	1,277,968	6,480,754	7,786,599	3,032,138
Other trading activities	4	1,321,319	-	-	1,321,319	1,323,464
Investments	5	7,999	-	-	7,999	12,399
Charitable activities	3	1,236,056	39,743,907	-	40,979,963	38,209,590
Teaching schools		-	337,725	-	337,725	328,000
Total income		2,593,251	41,359,600	6,480,754	50,433,605	42,905,591
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities		2,783,858	41,376,875	8,396,500	52,557,233	47,284,992
Teaching schools		-	325,725	-	325,725	326,000
Total expenditure		2,783,858	41,702,600	8,396,500	52,882,958	47,610,992
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		(190,607)	(343,000)	(1,915,746)	(2,449,353)	(4,705,401)
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	24	-	3,655,000	-	3,655,000	26,034,000
Net movement in funds		(190,607)	3,312,000	(1,915,746)	1,205,647	21,328,599
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		2,616,485	(3,317,092)	59,191,285	58,490,678	37,162,079
Net movement in funds		(190,607)	3,312,000	(1,915,746)	1,205,647	21,328,599
Total funds carried forward		2,425,878	(5,092)	57,275,539	59,696,325	58,490,678

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

The notes on pages 30 to 57 form part of these financial statements.

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 07618351

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	13	55,949,838	57,443,668
Current assets			
Debtors	14	5,820,636	1,252,321
Cash at bank and in hand		8,101,191	7,516,834
		13,921,827	8,769,155
Creditors: amounts due within one year	15	(9,775,620)	(4,001,757)
Net current assets		4,146,207	4,767,398
Total assets less current liabilities		60,096,045	62,211,066
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	16	(122,720)	(119,388)
Net assets excluding pension liability		59,973,325	62,091,678
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	24	(277,000)	(3,601,000)
Total net assets		59,696,325	58,490,678
Funds of the Trust			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	17	57,275,539	59,191,285
Restricted income funds	17	271,908	283,908
		57,547,447	59,475,193
Restricted funds excluding pension liability	17	57,547,447	59,475,193
Pension reserve	17	(277,000)	(3,601,000)
Total restricted funds	17	57,270,447	55,874,193
Unrestricted income funds	17	2,425,878	2,616,485
Total funds		59,696,325	58,490,678

The financial statements on pages 27 to 57 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 19 December 2023 and are signed on their behalf, by:

Mr D Barrs
Chair of Trustees

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities	19	(5,012,210)	224,378
Cash flows from investing activities	21	5,593,235	591,570
Cash flows from financing activities	20	3,332	(17,530)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		584,357	798,418
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		7,516,834	6,718,416
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	22, 23	<u>8,101,191</u>	<u>7,516,834</u>

The notes on pages 30 to 57 form part of these financial statements

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies

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

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee. The Members are noted on page 1. In the event of the Trust being wound up in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per Member. The registered office is Audley End Road, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4UH.

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

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

Saffron Academy Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The Trust's Functional and presentational currency is Pounds Sterling.

1.2 Going concern

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

The Trust derives the majority of its income from local and national government grant funding which is secured for a number of years, under the terms of the Academy Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education. This will ensure that the Trust can continue operating for a period of at least 12 months following the date of this report. The financial statements do not contain any adjustments that would be required if the Trust were not able to continue as a going concern.

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.3 Income

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.4 Expenditure

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

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

• **Charitable activities**

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

1.5 Interest receivable

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

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.6 Taxation

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

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

1.7 Tangible fixed assets

Assets costing £5,000 or more are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

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

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

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Freehold property	- 21 years straight line
Leasehold land	- 125 years straight line / 50 years straight line to residual value of £10,000,000.
Long term leasehold property and premises improvements	- 15/30 years straight line
Plant and machinery	- 10 years straight line
Computer equipment	- 3-10 years straight line
Motor vehicles	- 10 years straight line
Assets under construction	- Not depreciated

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

1.8 Debtors

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

1.9 Cash at bank and in hand

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

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.10 Liabilities

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

1.11 Financial instruments

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

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 14. Prepayments are not financial instruments. Cash at bank is classified as a basic financial instrument and is measured at face value.

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

Financial liabilities - trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in notes 15 and 16. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition. Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument.

1.12 Operating leases

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

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.13 Pensions

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

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

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

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

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

If pension scheme assets are more than liabilities a surplus is recognised only to the extent that the academy trust is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the scheme. Any change in the restriction of the surplus is an actuarial gain or loss and is recognised in other recognised gains and losses.

1.14 Agency arrangements

The Trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 bursary funds from the ESFA. Payments received from the ESFA and subsequent disbursements are excluded from the Statement of Financial Activities incorporating Income and Expenditure Account as the Trust does not have control over the charitable application of the funds. The funds received and paid and any balances held are disclosed in note 28.

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.15 Fund accounting

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

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

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

Investment income, gains and losses are allocated to the appropriate fund.

1.16 Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

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

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost or income for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 24, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the Actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2023. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

At the balance sheet date in some schools within the Trust the pension scheme assets were more than the liabilities, resulting in a surplus. It was necessary to determine the extent to which this surplus was capable of being recovered either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the scheme. A refund is only available on ceasing to participate in the scheme, which is not practicably possible whilst the Trust continues in operation due to the requirement to provide access to the scheme to relevant employees and would not be possible if the Trust were to cease operations as these operations would be transferred to another academy trust that would take over any asset. With regard to reductions in contributions the Trust is pooled with other trusts in the setting of its contribution rates under the scheme. In addition the Trust considers there to be a minimum funding requirement in respect of its contributions. Consequently the Trust does not consider that it is able to recover the surplus through reduced contributions in the future and has therefore restricted the surplus recognised to £nil.

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

2. Income from donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed assets 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Donations	27,877	1,277,968	65,102	1,370,947	1,013,577
Government grants	-	-	6,415,652	6,415,652	2,018,561
Total 2023	<u>27,877</u>	<u>1,277,968</u>	<u>6,480,754</u>	<u>7,786,599</u>	<u>3,032,138</u>
Total 2022	<u>23,178</u>	<u>899,979</u>	<u>2,108,981</u>	<u>3,032,138</u>	

In 2022, income from donations was £1,013,577, of which £23,178 was unrestricted, £899,979 was restricted and £90,420 was restricted fixed assets.

In 2022, income from government grants was £2,018,561, all of which was in relation to restricted fixed assets.

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

3. Funding for the Trust's charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Provision of education				
DfE/ESFA grants				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	34,624,406	34,624,406	33,254,227
Other DfE/ESFA grants				
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	37,319	37,319	2,211
Recovery Premium	-	258,961	258,961	188,044
Pupil Premium	-	1,103,149	1,103,149	1,007,534
Teachers pay grant	-	-	-	57,094
Rates Relief	-	166,378	166,378	159,064
Free school meals	-	221,646	221,646	203,424
Teachers pension grant	-	152,469	152,469	161,334
National Tutor grant	-	80,877	80,877	121,740
Sports premium	-	92,327	92,327	91,790
Summer School grant	-	-	-	108,096
Supplementary grant	-	924,152	924,152	334,115
MSAG	-	468,037	468,037	-
	-	-	38,129,721	35,688,673
Other Government grants				
Local authority grants	-	855,227	855,227	744,197
Other government grants	-	758,959	758,959	606,326
	-	1,614,186	1,614,186	1,350,523
Catering income	1,236,056	-	1,236,056	1,170,394
	1,236,056	39,743,907	40,979,963	38,209,590
Total 2023	1,236,056	39,743,907	40,979,963	38,209,590
Total 2022	1,170,394	37,039,196	38,209,590	

In 2022, income from DfE/ESFA grants was £35,688,673, all of which was restricted.

In 2022, income from other government grants was £1,350,523, all of which was restricted.

In 2022, income from other funding was £1,170,394, all of which was unrestricted.

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

4. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Hire of facilities	177,267	177,267	175,176
Other activities	1,144,052	1,144,052	1,148,288
	1,321,319	1,321,319	1,323,464
	1,323,464	1,323,464	
Total 2022			

In 2022, income from other trading activities was £1,148,288, all of which was unrestricted.

In 2022, income from hire of facilities was £175,176, of which all was unrestricted.

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

5. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Bank interest	7,999	7,999	12,399
	<u>7,999</u>	<u>7,999</u>	<u>12,399</u>
Total 2022	12,399	12,399	
	<u>12,399</u>	<u>12,399</u>	

In 2022, investment income was £12,399, all of which was unrestricted.

6. Expenditure

	Staff Costs 2023 £	Premises 2023 £	Other 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Direct costs	28,244,211	1,053,173	2,492,057	31,789,441	32,240,724
Support costs	7,707,201	11,106,118	1,954,473	20,767,792	15,044,268
Teaching school	270,000	-	55,725	325,725	326,000
Total 2023	<u>36,221,412</u>	<u>12,159,291</u>	<u>4,502,255</u>	<u>52,882,958</u>	<u>47,806,992</u>
Total 2022	36,008,791	7,298,965	4,499,236	47,806,992	
	<u>36,008,791</u>	<u>7,298,965</u>	<u>4,499,236</u>	<u>47,806,992</u>	

In 2023, of total expenditure, £2,783,858 was to unrestricted funds, £41,702,600 was to restricted funds and £8,396,500 was to restricted fixed asset funds.

In 2022, direct costs consisted of £28,646,588 staff costs, 1,100,284 premises costs and £2,493,852 other costs.

In 2022, allocated support costs consisted of £7,095,203 staff costs, £6,198,681 premises costs and £1,750,384 other costs.

In 2022, teaching school expenditure consisted of £267,000 staff costs and £59,000 other costs.

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

7. Charitable activities

	2023	2022
	£	£
Direct costs	31,789,441	32,240,724
Support Costs	20,767,792	15,044,268
Teaching School	325,725	326,000
	52,882,958	47,610,992

	2023	2022
	£	£
Analysis of support costs		
Support staff costs	7,707,201	7,095,203
Depreciation	2,323,256	2,127,154
Technology costs	288,860	292,818
Premises costs (excluding depreciation)	8,782,862	4,071,527
Other support costs	1,623,730	1,416,376
Governance costs	41,883	41,190
Legal costs	-	-
	20,767,792	15,044,268

8. Net expenditure

Net expenditure for the year includes:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Operating lease rentals	43,086	83,533
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	2,323,256	2,127,154
Fees paid to Auditors for:		
- audit	21,800	19,815
- other services	17,805	14,220
	21,800	19,815

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

9. Staff

a. Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	26,570,147	24,932,079
Social security costs	2,580,305	2,437,271
Pension costs	6,411,228	8,039,515
	<u>35,561,680</u>	<u>35,408,865</u>
Agency staff costs	659,732	599,926
	<u><u>36,221,412</u></u>	<u><u>36,008,791</u></u>

b. Staff numbers

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

	2023 No.	2022 No.
Teachers	444	437
Administration and support	445	441
Management	9	8
	<u>898</u>	<u>886</u>

c. Higher paid staff

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

	2023 No.	2022 No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	19	12
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	9	5
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	3	1
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	2	4
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	4	2
In the band £140,001 - £150,000	-	1
In the band £150,001 - £160,000	1	-
	<u><u>1</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

9. Staff (continued)

d. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Trust comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Trust was £1,349,058 (2022 - £1,221,282).

Employer national insurance contributions included within key management personnel remuneration was £125,605 (2022 - £116,306).

Employer pension contributions included within key management personnel remuneration was £234,979 (2022 - £212,196).

10. Central services

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

- Insurance
- Financial co-ordination (including Management Information and Regulatory Reporting)
- Payroll
- IT network co-ordination
- Facilities and health & safety co-ordination
- Co-ordination of SCA funding

The Trust charges for these services on the following basis:

The Trust charges for these services on a flat percentage of income being 6% of GAG and a contribution to Trust capital expenditure. The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Saffron Walden County High School	696,493	602,781
Alec Hunter Academy	319,516	262,189
Katherine Semar Junior Academy	111,454	98,534
Katherine Semar Infants School	-	-
R A Butler Junior Academy	163,219	144,835
R A Butler Infants Academy	-	-
Honywood School	257,402	239,299
Helena Romanes School	422,081	365,130
Beckers Green Primary School	76,822	67,421
Total	2,046,987	1,780,189

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

11. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

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

		2023	2022
		£	£
Ms C Derbyshire	Remuneration	150,000 - 155,000	145,000 - 150,000
	Pension contributions paid	35,000 - 40,000	30,000 - 35,000

During the year ended 31 August 2023, expenses totalling £NIL were reimbursed or paid directly to Trustees (2022 - £NIL to Trustee).

12. Trustees' and Officers' insurance

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Trust has purchased insurance to protect Trustees and Officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Trust business. The insurance provides cover up to £5,000,000 on any one claim. The cost of this insurance is included in the total insurance cost.

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

13. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold property £	Long-term leasehold property £	Assets under construction £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Motor vehicles £	Total £
Cost or valuation							
At 1 September 2022	11,498,024	49,637,621	47,808	4,687,431	1,455,060	66,661	67,392,605
Additions	-	-	46,392	532,791	251,233	-	830,416
Disposals	-	-	(995)	-	-	-	(995)
Transfers between classes	-	-	(40,198)	23,129	17,069	-	-
At 31 August 2023	<u>11,498,024</u>	<u>49,637,621</u>	<u>53,007</u>	<u>5,243,351</u>	<u>1,723,362</u>	<u>66,661</u>	<u>68,222,026</u>
Depreciation							
At 1 September 2022	1,470,438	5,696,762	-	1,546,076	1,171,396	64,265	9,948,937
Charge for the year	362,244	1,217,707	-	598,722	142,366	2,212	2,323,251
At 31 August 2023	<u>1,832,682</u>	<u>6,914,469</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,144,798</u>	<u>1,313,762</u>	<u>66,477</u>	<u>12,272,188</u>
Net book value							
At 31 August 2023	<u><u>9,665,342</u></u>	<u><u>42,723,152</u></u>	<u><u>53,007</u></u>	<u><u>3,098,553</u></u>	<u><u>409,600</u></u>	<u><u>184</u></u>	<u><u>55,949,838</u></u>
At 31 August 2022	<u><u>10,027,586</u></u>	<u><u>43,940,859</u></u>	<u><u>47,808</u></u>	<u><u>3,141,355</u></u>	<u><u>283,664</u></u>	<u><u>2,396</u></u>	<u><u>57,443,668</u></u>

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

14. Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	230,901	81,060
Other debtors	2,785	338,178
Prepayments and accrued income	5,393,701	691,948
VAT recoverable	193,249	141,135
	5,820,636	1,252,321
	5,820,636	1,252,321

15. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	1,142,604	756,283
Other taxation and social security	621,323	590,311
Other creditors	1,092,524	932,366
Accruals and deferred income	6,919,169	1,722,797
	9,775,620	4,001,757
	9,775,620	4,001,757
	2023 £	2022 £
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	769,175	732,333
Resources deferred during the year	666,938	769,175
Amounts released from previous periods	(769,175)	(732,333)
	666,938	769,175
	666,938	769,175

Resources deferred in the year relate primarily to contributions towards future educational visits, and ESFA funding received in advance for the 2023/24 academic year.

16. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Other creditors	122,720	119,388
	122,720	119,388

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

17. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
Unrestricted funds						
Unrestricted funds	2,616,485	2,593,251	(2,783,858)	-	-	2,425,878
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	34,624,406	(34,624,406)	-	-	-
Other DfE / ESFA grants	-	3,541,475	(3,541,475)	-	-	-
Other Government grants	-	1,578,026	(1,578,026)	-	-	-
Restricted donations	269,908	1,277,968	(1,275,968)	-	-	271,908
Teaching schools	14,000	337,725	(351,725)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(3,601,000)	-	(331,000)	-	3,655,000	(277,000)
	(3,317,092)	41,359,600	(41,702,600)	-	3,655,000	(5,092)
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Restricted fixed assets	57,443,667	-	(2,323,251)	829,421	-	55,949,837
Capital grants	1,747,618	6,480,754	(6,073,249)	(829,421)	-	1,325,702
	59,191,285	6,480,754	(8,396,500)	-	-	57,275,539
Total Restricted funds	55,874,193	47,840,354	(50,099,100)	-	3,655,000	57,270,447
Total funds	58,490,678	50,433,605	(52,882,958)	-	3,655,000	59,696,325

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

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

17. Statement of funds (continued)

Other DfE/ESFA grants

This represents various grants from the DfE and ESFA for the provision of specific services to pupils of the Schools.

General Annual Grant (GAG)

This represents funding from the ESFA to be used for the normal running costs of the Trust, including education and support costs

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

Restricted donations

This represents donations income for trips/events for the pupils of the Schools.

Pension reserve

This reserve represents the Trust's share of the deficit on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) transferred to the Trust on conversion from state controlled schools.

Other Government grants

This represents various grants from local and national Government bodies for the provision of specific services to pupils of the Schools.

Fixed asset fund

Restricted fixed asset funds are resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by the DfE where the asset acquired or created is held for a specific purpose. The transfer between funds represents additions purchased through capital funding.

Capital grants

This represents funding from the DfE, ESFA and Local Authority for capital projects.

Teaching schools

This represents funding received from the Department for Education to run the Saffron Teaching Hub.

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

17. Statement of funds (continued)

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

	Balance at 1 September 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2022 £
Unrestricted funds						
Unrestricted funds	1,836,028	2,529,435	(2,027,586)	278,608	-	2,616,485
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	7,756	33,254,227	(33,261,983)	-	-	-
Other DfE / ESFA grants	237,708	2,660,401	(2,660,401)	(237,708)	-	-
Other Government grants	-	1,124,568	(1,124,568)	-	-	-
Restricted donations	375,592	899,979	(980,495)	(25,168)	-	269,908
Teaching schools	12,000	328,000	(326,000)	-	-	14,000
Pension reserve	(26,687,000)	-	(2,948,000)	-	26,034,000	(3,601,000)
	<u>(26,053,944)</u>	<u>38,267,175</u>	<u>(41,301,447)</u>	<u>(262,876)</u>	<u>26,034,000</u>	<u>(3,317,092)</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Restricted fixed assets	58,186,580	-	(2,127,154)	1,384,241	-	57,443,667
Capital grants	3,193,415	2,108,981	(2,154,805)	(1,399,973)	-	1,747,618
	<u>61,379,995</u>	<u>2,108,981</u>	<u>(4,281,959)</u>	<u>(15,732)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>59,191,285</u>
Total Restricted funds	<u>35,326,051</u>	<u>40,376,156</u>	<u>(45,583,406)</u>	<u>(278,608)</u>	<u>26,034,000</u>	<u>55,874,193</u>
Total funds	<u><u>37,162,079</u></u>	<u><u>42,905,591</u></u>	<u><u>(47,610,992)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>26,034,000</u></u>	<u><u>58,490,678</u></u>

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

17. Statement of funds (continued)

Total funds analysis by Academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2023 were allocated as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Saffron Walden County High School	-	1,109,503
Alec Hunter Academy	-	(63,533)
Katherine Semar Junior School	-	172,441
R A Butler Infant School	-	303,441
Honeywood Community Science School	-	54,575
Helena Romanes School	-	185,222
Beckers Green Primary School	-	79,659
Central services	2,697,786	1,059,085
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve	2,697,786	2,900,393
Restricted fixed asset fund	57,275,539	59,191,285
Pension reserve	(277,000)	(3,601,000)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	59,696,325	58,490,678
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

17. Statement of funds (continued)

Total cost analysis by Academy

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

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
SWC	9,165,695	2,144,719	1,173,049	3,024,382	15,507,845	14,339,405
AHA	4,139,246	1,010,444	207,455	1,157,594	6,514,739	6,092,098
KSJ	1,671,666	532,173	142,289	505,125	2,851,253	3,186,597
RBI	2,545,662	388,662	158,340	695,777	3,788,441	3,900,375
HWD	3,801,315	1,008,363	225,683	4,818,381	9,853,742	6,035,052
HRS	5,220,543	1,229,714	269,423	1,466,180	8,185,860	8,000,427
BGS	1,364,945	204,367	82,420	247,755	1,899,487	1,927,970
Central services	335,139	1,458,759	7,471	156,966	1,958,335	2,001,914
Total	28,244,211	7,977,201	2,266,130	12,072,160	50,559,702	45,483,838

18. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	55,949,838	55,949,838
Current assets	2,425,878	5,236,884	6,259,065	13,921,827
Creditors due within one year	-	(4,964,976)	(4,810,644)	(9,775,620)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	-	(122,720)	(122,720)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(277,000)	-	(277,000)
Total	2,425,878	(5,092)	57,275,539	59,696,325

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

18. Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2022 £	Total funds 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	57,443,668	57,443,668
Current assets	2,616,485	3,976,816	2,175,854	8,769,155
Creditors due within one year	-	(3,692,908)	(308,849)	(4,001,757)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	-	(119,388)	(119,388)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(3,601,000)	-	(3,601,000)
Total	<u>2,616,485</u>	<u>(3,317,092)</u>	<u>59,191,285</u>	<u>58,490,678</u>

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

	2023 £	2022 £
Net expenditure for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	(2,449,353)	(4,705,401)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	2,323,251	2,127,154
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(6,415,652)	(2,018,561)
Interest receivable	(7,999)	(12,399)
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	331,000	2,948,000
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(4,568,315)	1,558,126
Increase in creditors	5,773,863	272,312
Loss on disposal	995	55,147
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities	<u>(5,012,210)</u>	<u>224,378</u>

20. Cash flows from financing activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Repayments of borrowing	<u>3,332</u>	<u>(17,530)</u>

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

21. Cash flows from investing activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Interest	7,999	12,399
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(830,416)	(1,439,390)
Capital grants from DfE/ESFA and other capital income	6,415,652	2,018,561
Net cash provided by investing activities	5,593,235	591,570

22. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash in hand and at bank	8,101,191	7,516,834

23. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 September 2022 £	Cash flows £	At 31 August 2023 £
Cash at bank and in hand	7,516,834	584,357	8,101,191

24. Pension commitments

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

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

Contributions amounting to £694,021 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2023 (2022 - £645,240) and are included within creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

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

24. Pension commitments (continued)

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 30 October 2023. The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

- employer contribution rates set at 28.68% 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 £262,000 million and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222,200 million, giving a notional past service deficit of £39,800 million; and
- the SCAPE rate, set by HMT, is used to determine the notional investment return. The current SCAPE rate is 2.4% above the rate of CPI, assumed real rate of return is 2.4% in excess of prices and 2% in excess of earnings. The rate of real earnings growth is assumed to be 2.2%. The assumed nominal rate of return including earnings growth is 4.45%.

The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2027.

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £4,259,662 (2022 - £4,052,042).

A copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation is on the Teachers' Pensions website (<https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/news/employers/2023/10/valuation-result.aspx>).

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

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2023 was £2,378,000 (2022 - £2,099,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £1,911,000 (2022 - £1,686,000) and employees' contributions totalled £ 467,000 (2022 - £413,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 20.6 - 25.0 per cent for employers and 5.5 - 12.5 per cent for employees.

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

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

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

24. Pension commitments (continued)

Principal actuarial assumptions

	2023 %	2022 %
Rate of increase in salaries	3.88	3.95
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.88	2.95
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.31	4.25
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.88	2.95

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

	2023 Years	2022 Years
Retiring today		
Males	20.7	21.0
Females	23.2	23.5
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	22.0	22.4
Females	24.6	24.9

As at 31 August 2022 the Trust had a pension liability of £277,000 (2021 - £3,601,000). The sensitivity analysis detailed below would increase/(decrease) the closing defined benefit obligation in the following way;

Sensitivity analysis

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Discount rate +0.1%	(524)	(688)
Discount rate -0.1%	538	705
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	835	887
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	(812)	(861)
CPI rate +0.1%	524	663
CPI rate -0.1%	(510)	(647)

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

24. Pension commitments (continued)

Share of scheme assets

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

	At 31 August 2023 £	At 31 August 2022 £
Equities	17,088,000	14,989,000
Gilts	377,000	512,000
Other bonds	-	1,180,000
Property	2,299,000	2,519,000
Cash and other liquid assets	861,000	797,000
Alternative assets	4,651,000	3,989,000
Other managed funds	4,098,000	2,649,000
Total market value of assets	29,374,000	26,635,000

The scheme's assets are valued at £29,374,000, due to this resulting in assets exceeding liabilities a surplus exists. The surplus has been capped by an asset ceiling calculated by the actuary based on application of the scheme rules which state the trust only has a limited entitlement to future economic benefit resulting from this actuarial valuation. The value of this is £252,000 which has restricted the value of assets recognised in the accounts to £29,122,000.

The actual return on scheme assets was £1,288,000 (2022 - £66,000).

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

	2023 £	2022 £
Current service cost	(2,123,000)	(3,970,000)
Interest income	1,167,000	426,000
Interest cost	(1,269,000)	(1,079,000)
Administrative expenses	(17,000)	(11,000)
Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities	(2,242,000)	(4,634,000)

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

24. Pension commitments (continued)

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

	2023 £	2022 £
At 1 September	30,236,000	51,605,000
Current service cost	2,123,000	3,970,000
Interest cost	1,269,000	1,079,000
Employee contributions	467,000	413,000
Actuarial gains	(3,908,000)	(26,394,000)
Benefits paid	(788,000)	(437,000)
At 31 August	<u>29,399,000</u>	<u>30,236,000</u>

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

	2023 £	2022 £
At 1 September	26,635,000	24,918,000
Interest income	1,167,000	426,000
Actuarial losses	(253,000)	(360,000)
Employer contributions	1,911,000	1,686,000
Employee contributions	467,000	413,000
Benefits paid	(788,000)	(437,000)
Admin costs	(17,000)	(11,000)
At 31 August	<u>29,122,000</u>	<u>26,635,000</u>

During the year there has been a significant reduction in the LGPS liability as a result of changes in the actuaries assumptions. The Trustees recognise that the movement in the liability does not have a direct impact on the financial health and cash flows of the Trust, and that the movement may unwind in future periods.

25. Operating lease commitments

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

	2023 £	2022 £
Not later than 1 year	119,332	43,086
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	381,776	52,442
	<u>501,108</u>	<u>95,528</u>

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

26. Members' liability

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

27. Related party transactions

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

Any transactions where the Trustee has a pecuniary interest is only undertaken in accordance with the 'at cost' principle stated in the Academies Financial Handbook. The following related party transactions took place in the period of account:

Saffron Educational Trust (SET) - a company with common Directors;

- SET owns the freehold of the SWCHS site and is effectively the Academy's landlord. No rent is payable on the use of the land.

Saffron Hall Trust - a company in which C Derbyshire, D Barrs and M Hayes (Trustees) collectively have significant influence:

- The Trust reimbursed Saffron Hall Trust £15,099 (2022 - £15,004), and was reimbursed £32,148 (2022 - £8,044) by them during the period, these transactions being in respect of the costs of managing a shared space. The Trust owed Saffron Hall Trust £NIL at the year end (2022 - £7,000).

28. Agency arrangements

The Trust distributes 16-19 bursary funds to students as an agent for ESFA. In the accounting period ending 31 August 2020 the Trust received £27,814 (2022 - £27,434) and disbursed £27,814 (2022 - £33,873) from the fund. An amount of £Nil (2022 - £Nil) is included in other creditors relating to undistributed funds that is repayable to ESFA.