

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST

(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

CONTENTS

	Page
Reference and Administrative Details	1
Trustees' Report	2 - 12
Governance Statement	13 - 18
Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance	19
Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities	20
Independent Auditors' Report on the Financial Statements	21 - 24
Independent Reporting Accountant's Report on Regularity	25 - 26
Statement of Financial Activities Incorporating Income and Expenditure Account	27
Balance Sheet	28
Statement of Cash Flows	29
Notes to the Financial Statements	30 - 56

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	Mrs J Baker Mr D Login Mr P Myers Mrs S Barr (appointed 12 September 2024)
Trustees	Mr D Login, Chair of Trustees Ms A Cooper (resigned 9 May 2024) Ms D Eason Mr S Marchant (resigned 31 August 2024) Mrs W Openshaw (resigned 12 September 2024) Mrs J Sharp Mr D Wickham Ms K Coulson (appointed 2 October 2023, resigned 17 January 2024) Ms R Ashmore (appointed 2 October 2023) Ms L Brewer (appointed 6 November 2024) Ms G Tanner (appointed 5 December 2024)
Company registered number	10359418
Company name	Larwood Academy Trust
Principal and registered office	Larwood Drive Stevenage Hertfordshire SG1 5BZ
Company Secretary	Ms C Cosson
Accounting Officer	Mr P Van De Merwe
Senior Management Team	Mr P Van Der Merwe, Executive Headteacher Ms C Cosson, Head of Finance and Operations Mr P Smith, Headteacher, Brandles School Mrs B Osobu, Head of School, Larwood School Mr I Reid, Deputy Headteacher, Brandles School Ms N Wilsher, Deputy Headteacher, Brandles School Mr J Scales, Assistant Headteacher, Larwood School
Independent Auditors	Price Bailey LLP Chartered Accountants Causeway House 1 Dane Street Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire CM23 3BT
Bankers	Lloyds Bank PLC 3 Town Square Stevenage SG1 1BG

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the financial statements and Auditor's Report of Larwood Academy Trust (The Trust or the Charitable Company) for the year ended 31 August 2024. The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' Report, and a Directors' Report under company law.

The Trust operates as a two school multi-academy trust, comprising a special needs primary school and a special needs secondary school. Larwood School serves a catchment area in Stevenage, East and North Hertfordshire, with the capacity, from 2023/24, for 105 primary age pupils. Brandles School is based in Baldock, serving the same catchment area in Hertfordshire, with a capacity for 70 secondary age pupils.

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 (AoA) 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 (also referred to in this report as schools):

- Larwood School converted on 01/11/2016
- Brandles School converted on 01/02/2020

The operation of the Trust and employment of staff are the responsibility of the Trustees. The Trust retains control of school budgets and finances, and monitors these through its Finance and Resources Committee (FRC).

Details of the Trustees who served throughout the period 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.

Trustees and Officers' Indemnities

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 via the RPA Scheme provides cover up to £10,000,000 on any one claim and details of the costs are disclosed in the accounts.

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

The arrangements are as set out in the Articles of Association (AoA) and Funding Agreement.

In accordance with the AoA, Members may appoint, by ordinary resolution, up to eight Trustees. Any election of Parent Trustees will be held by secret ballot. Trustees are appointed for a fixed term of four years. The AoA make provision for the Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) to be appointed as an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees (BoT) and, overall, for a minimum of three Trustees with no maximum specified.

The BoT is currently made up of five Trustees appointed by Members and two Parent Trustees.

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

The Trust is committed to providing adequate opportunities for Trustees to undertake and receive suitable training so as to enable them to perform their role effectively. To this end the Trust links with a number of local training providers and new Trustees are encouraged to attend various sessions. The induction programme would involve a tour of the schools, meetings with students and staff, and provision of policy and procedure documents that are appropriate to the role they undertake with particular emphasis on committee work.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

As part of a comprehensive induction programme, a range of documents are supplied to a new Trustee which reflect the Trust's financial position, curriculum initiatives and safeguarding aspects over the previous 12 months to enable them to participate in and contribute to effective scrutiny and strategic planning.

Organisational Structure

The governance of the Trust is defined in the Memorandum and AoA together with the Funding Agreement with the Department for Education (DfE).

The day-to-day running of operational matters is conducted by our Executive Headteacher, through the Trust's centralised Executive Leadership Team (ELT), and through to the individual school Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs), which are led by the Headteacher or equivalent, and Trust Operational Teams (TOTs) which have been introduced to help standardise and develop provision across the Trust in key functional areas. The Executive Headteacher is the Accounting Officer (AO). The Head of Finance and Operations oversees and directs all matters connected to finance.

Therefore, the Trust structure consists of the following layers:

- Board of Trustees (BoT)
- Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)
- Finance and Resources Committee (FRC)
- Standards Committee (SC)
- ELT
- SLTs/TOTs.

The BoT meets on at least six occasions per year and its three committees meet at least three times per year.

The BoT is responsible for the strategic direction of the Trust. The Trustees are responsible for setting strategic policy, adopting the Trust's strategic development plan, receiving school improvement plans and budgets, monitoring the Trust's progress using those plans and budgets and making major decisions about the direction of the Trust, capital expenditure and senior staff appointments. The Trustees within the committees are responsible for implementing strategic policy, ensuring the appropriateness of annual budgets and capital expenditure projects and monitoring performance against those plans, budgets and authorised capital limits.

The ELT coordinates the processes of converting strategic intention and direction into implementation. This is done through the individual school improvement plans. The ELT also maintains control and monitoring of central processes of safeguarding, finance and accounting, risk, administration, estates and IT.

The SLTs control safeguarding and education in each school at an executive level implementing policies and reporting through the committee structure. The SLTs are responsible for the day-to-day operation of each school, 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.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

Key management personnel include the Executive Headteacher and those staff to whom the Trustees have delegated significant authority and responsibility in the day-to-day running of the Trust. All Trustees are non-salaried, with expenses being reimbursed via the established authorisation procedure.

The BoT has adopted a pay and appraisal policy to provide clear framework for the management of pay and appraisal for all staff employed in the Trust. This is reviewed by the FRC and approved by the BoT.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Trustees recognise the requirement that all pay progression decisions for employees must be linked to annual appraisal of performance; indeed, for teachers it is statutory. The policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of staff, including the ELT, and for supporting their development within the context of the Trust's development and improvement plans for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected. It also sets out the arrangements that will apply when staff fall below the levels of competence that are expected of them.

The policy complies with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and the accompanying statutory guidance and with national and local pay agreements for support staff.

When recruiting a new member of staff, Trustees, ELT and SLTs will consider a range of factors when setting the appropriate salary level, including:

- The nature of the post
- The level of qualifications, skills and experience required
- Market conditions
- The wider school context
- Any specific restrictions set out in the STPCD.

As part of the Trust's internal scrutiny work, the BoT commissioned a review of its pay and appraisal policy. This review compared the policy with current sector requirements and practice; and analysed how the policy is being implemented in order to ensure there are no internal or external disparities, and that pay is being managed consistently, equitably and in line with sector guidelines. Recommendations arising from the review have been implemented in 2023/24.

Trade union facility time

The Trust has one official Trade Union representative within the members of staff.

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period (Headcount)	1
Full-time equivalent employee number	1

Percentage of time spent on facility time

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

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Provide the total cost of facility time	£121
Provide the total pay bill	£3,841,919
Percentage of total pay bill spent on facility time	0.003%

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours = 0

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

Owing to the nature of the Trust's operations and the composition of the BoT 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. 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 DfE's Academy Trust Handbook, including notifying the Education and Skills Agency (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.

All Trustees provide an annual declaration of connected persons plus business or other interests they have with organisations, individuals and charities for complete transparency. Any pecuniary interests which may overlap with the operations of the Trust are identified and published on school websites. Any potential conflicts of interest are recorded in the minutes of committee meetings where a decision is required and the appropriate steps to avoid any such conflict of interest are in place.

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

- AD Bly Construction
- Baldock Catholic Church
- Baldock Events Forum
- Baldock Horticultural Society
- Friends of Brandles School
- JT Coaching
- Jubilee Court Care Home, Stevenage
- Karate Club, Baldock
- Redeemed Christian Church of God
- Stevenage Borough Council
- The Butterfly Room
- The Shepherd Group
- Thurley Dance School.

The Trust does not have a formal sponsor.

Objectives and Activities

Objects and Aims

The principal object of the Trust is to advance, for the public benefit, education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools specially organised to make special educational provision for students with special educational needs:

- Larwood School, a co-educational special school for primary aged children with social, emotional and mental health related difficulties.
- Brandles School, a special school for secondary aged boys with social, emotional and mental health related difficulties.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Current Year Strategic Development Priorities

During the year the Trust has worked towards the following strategic development priorities:

- Ensuring that most of our learners made outstanding progress when compared to starting points and context. Progress takes account of:
 - a. Positive outcomes for year 6 pupils (end of Key Stage 2) at Larwood with 80% demonstrating improved progress. Positive outcomes for year 11 pupils with the majority of pupils moving to vocational training or an educational setting
 - b. Maintained high attendance of 91.8% at Larwood School, which is above the national average. Attendance at Brandles School was 78.7%, above the national average for SEN pupils of 72%
 - c. Maintained very low number of restrictive physical interventions at Larwood School; number of such incidents remained at 1, which is well below the national average for SEN settings. At Brandles School, the number of restrictive physical interventions remained stable.
 - d. Continued to develop and refine interventions at Brandles School, including introducing an ASD support room and The Hive to support social, emotional and academic outcomes.
- Providing wellbeing support that is life-changing:
 - a. Secured mental health support within schools via referral pathways to both internal and external NHS support
 - b. Inclusion of various wellbeing aspects in the robust staff CPD programme
 - c. Provided access to therapeutic interventions via The Butterfly Room for staff, students and families
 - d. Joined the Perkbox scheme which provides discounted services for shopping and entertainment
 - e. Used staff surveys to identify well-being needs and initiate proposals
- Sustaining growth:
 - a. Larwood School had 105 pupils against a forecast of 101 and plans to grow to 123 in 2024/25. This increase of 18 pupils will be fully accommodated by the new Pathways Programme.
 - b. Brandles School had 71 pupils against a forecast of 72 and plans to maintain this in 2024/25.
- Enabling staff to develop an adaptable mindset:
 - a. Enrolled senior leadership staff on the NPQH and NPQEL educational leadership programmes
 - b. Qualified two new teachers
 - c. Qualified one new early career teacher
 - d. Developed middle leaders, extended SLTs, TOTs and an education, health and care plan (EHCP) review team
 - e. Developed staff to improve effectiveness at all levels
 - f. Developed new strategies including expanding the number of schools supported and increasing the relevant staff for the outreach programme, which now operates a full timetable, and developing the onsite alternative provision, thus ensuring access to education for pupils who are at risk of exclusion
 - g. Formalised the Trust acting roles into substantive appointments
 - h. Enabled a number of staff to grow and share best practice externally
- Innovating our curriculum, through continually refreshing and rethinking our ways:
 - a. Focused on the core subjects and interventions related to those subjects
 - b. Adapted curriculum approaches to best support individual children
 - c. Established the Forest School, thereby enhancing personal development, quality of education and improved behaviour.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Our overall success in fulfilling our aims and priorities was measured by and monitored through:

- a. Student engagement feedback, with key themes being feeling safe, feeling understood and positive recognition of the rewards programmes
- b. Carer and parent feedback and participation in our mutual successes
- c. 100% of pupils transitioning to secondary school
- d. The majority of students engaging with work and further education
- e. Occasionally a small number of primary students opt for mainstream secondary school provision, dependent on parental preference
- f. Self-evaluations
- g. Trustee monitoring visits
- h. School Effectiveness Advisor Partner feedback
- i. Ofsted reports.

Public Benefit

The Trustees believe that by working towards the objectives 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

We have continued work on ambitions to establish an all through (currently 5-16) educational pathway for social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) children in the North Hertfordshire area. This strategic focus is underpinned by our recently approved vision 'to provide education and opportunities that change lives' and mission 'to promote an inclusive environment for all whilst striving for excellence in every individual'. Our feedback informs us that our provision is characterised by quality experiences, and a creative, engaging and personalised curriculum. This makes it different to the experiences of pupils prior to arriving with us. In addition, we also run an outreach programme in mainstream schools across Stevenage. This strives to make positive changes to local children in these schools with SEN.

Common to the national educational eco-system, we have an increasing demand to support pupils diagnosed with autism. We are continually appraising our autism strategy; we have retained our Autism Accreditation for Larwood School and our aim remains to commence the National Autism Accreditation programme at Brandles School by the end of 2024/25.

Our day-to-day provision has grown to become comprised of:

- Larwood School (primary) day provision for 105 SEMH pupils (many with additional needs), including the Space Hub for 16 pupils, that caters for SEMH pupils with autism.
- Brandles School (secondary) day provision for up to 72 pupils with SEMH and a range of additional needs.

We have continued to strengthen oversight of safeguarding arrangements introducing annual external reviews at both schools, in addition to the BoT's robust, regular and systematic checks of provision and its impact. Alongside safeguarding, behaviour expectations and development are central to the Trust's excellence, which are achieved through continued safeguarding training for staff, consistent coaching support and bespoke pupil focused risk assessments and anxiety mapping that leads to gentle interventions.

During the year, Brandles School received an Ofsted inspection and was able to demonstrate significant progress since its last visit in 2018/19, receiving an overall 'Good' rating:

- Staff at Brandles understand how to cater for the needs of pupils who attend the school
- Pupils work hard to aspire to the school values, 'ready, respectful and safe', which provide them with a simple approach of they should behave at school
- Pupils know that they can share concerns and adults with help to resolve them
- Pupils enjoy different opportunities for hands-on learning; they learn how to mend scooters and bikes and use the outdoors to develop bushcraft and horticultural skills.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

We have completed capital projects at both schools:

- Installation of new security fencing around one of the playgrounds at Larwood School
- Invested in new boilers for the main boiler house at Larwood School
- Installation of a new sports pitch, climbing wall and assault course at Brandles School
- Continued to invest in fencing and access security controls at Brandles School thus improving security
- Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) enabled the completion of fire safety projects and roof improvements at both schools.

Our governance has been enhanced following an external review:

- Consolidating training and knowledge sharing across the BoT, which includes the advantage of centrally developed policies and procedures.
- Undertaking BoT skills and experience audits, resulting in the recruitment of a number of new Trustees bringing expertise in compliance and risk, education, human resources and information technology.
- Investing in both internal and external advisory and administrative support.
- Developing annual schedules of business for BoT committees and ensuring individual roles and responsibilities are distributed strategically.
- Embedding a culture of robust scrutiny and a balance of support and challenge between the BoT and ELT.

Modelling our values of caring, understanding, collaboration, commitment and ambition through our support of staff, and their wellbeing, is a priority:

- Providing access to trained therapists and counsellors through our close relationship with The Butterfly Room
- Support systems within each school aided by the sense of care shown by staff for each other
- Hearing, responding to and celebrating staff feedback
- Undertaking an external benchmarking review of pay and appraisal to ensure staff are remunerated and recognised equitably and appropriately.

Our succession planning, including the sharing of best practice, has enabled us to promote leaders from within our staff ranks. This also enabled the Trust to focus on integrating new partners and developing further educational excellence, operational capacity and increased pupil numbers.

Going Concern

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

Financial Review

The principal sources of funding for the Trust are the general annual grant (GAG) that it receives from the ESFA and local authority top-up funding. For the year ended 31 August 2024, the Trust received in total £4,890,848 of GAG, LA funding and other income (excluding capital funding). A high percentage of this income was 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 spent £4,657,297 on general running costs (excluding capital expenditure and LGPS pension adjustments) and transferred £16,767 for CIF loan repayments and £57,380 to support capital projects on our various sites. Capital projects in 2023/24 were on a small scale, due to the high level of investment undertaken in the previous year. The Trust brought forward £283,547 of restricted and £314,763 of unrestricted funding from 2022/23. Excluding restricted fixed asset and pension funds, the carry forward for 2023/24 is £426,859 restricted and £330,855 unrestricted funds.

Under FRS102, the Trust is recognising a pension valuation of £nil. See notes 1.15 and 24.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Key factors that are likely to affect the Trust's financial performance going forward are referenced in the 'Plans for Future Periods' section.

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. The Trustees monitor estimated year-end carry forward figures via management accounts at the FRC and BoT. 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 Trust's current level of free reserves (total funds less the amount held in fixed assets and restricted funds) is £330,855 (2023: £314,763). This has been built up from a mixture of locally raised income and balances transferred from previous years' prudent financial control. This is being held to assist in making strategic decisions to keep in line with national funding changes and challenges.

The Trust's balance on restricted general funds (excluding pension reserve) plus the balance on unrestricted funds at 31 August 2024 was £757,714 (2023: £598,310).

The cash balance of the Trust has been very healthy all year, ending with a balance of £1,173,163. The Trustees monitor cash flow via the FRC and attempt to hold a bare minimum of £300,000 to cover short term cash flow variances (which equates to one month's total payroll costs). The appropriate level of reserves to be held for non-earmarked expenditure should equate to a minimum of 8% of total income (restricted and unrestricted) to provide sufficient working capital to cover delays in the spending and receipt of funding and to provide a cushion for unexpected emergencies.

Investment Policy

The most recent investment management policy was approved by the BoT in January 2024 and is due for review in January 2025.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that funds that the Trust does not immediately need to cover anticipated expenditure are invested to maximise its income but with minimal risk. The aim is to research where funds may be deposited applying prudence in ensuring there is minimum risk. The Trustees do not consider the investment of surplus funds as a primary activity, rather as good stewardship and as and when circumstances allow.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trust maintains a central risk register identifying, categorising and allocating risks to the appropriate responsible person/s. Risks are categorised as Strategic and Reputational, Governance, Financial, Operational, and Compliance.

Risk exposures are described, assessed and mitigation actions taken. This register is approved by the BoT and monitored by ARC. ARC reviews risks against its internal scrutiny plans and reports to the BoT. This register is maintained and monitored by the ELT and SLTs.

The internal control systems and the exposure to identified risks are monitored on behalf of the Trustees at each ARC meeting. The principal risks facing the Trust are outlined below; those facing the schools at an operational level are addressed by their 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.

It is recognised that systems can only provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that major risks have been adequately managed.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

As a small Trust at present, the level of financial risk is low. Cash flows can be reliably forecast, monitored and reported. Staff costs make up most of the expenditure and are relatively stable with contingencies in place to cover such items as sickness and maternity.

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

- Funding – the Trust has considerable reliance on continued Government funds through the ESFA and there is no assurance that Government policy or practice will remain the same or that public funding will continue at the same levels or on the same terms.
- Governance and/or management – the Trustees continue to review and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to effectively manage the Trust's finances, internal controls, compliance with regulations and legislation, statutory returns etc.
- Reputational – the Trustees closely monitor each school's educational character and continuous improvement and review student progress and outcomes in order to maintain the highest educational outcomes and attract applicants in sufficient numbers.
- 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 and safety and discipline.
- Staffing – the Trust is reliant on the quality of its staff and the Trustees monitor and review policies, procedures, recruitment and performance management, to ensure continued development as well as clear succession planning.
- Fraud and mismanagement of funds – The Trust has appointed Price Bailey and other external providers to carry out independent and external audits on financial systems and records as required by the Academy Trust Handbook and all finance staff receive training to keep up to date with financial practice requirements and develop their skills in this area.
- Financial instruments – the Trust only deals with bank balances, cash and trade creditors, with limited trade (and other) debtors; therefore risk is low.
- Defined benefit pension liability – as the Government has agreed to meet the defined benefit pension liability in the necessary circumstances the main risk to the Trust is an annual cash flow funding of part of the deficit which the Trustees take into account when setting the annual budget plan.
- Estates management and security – the Trustees are aware of the importance of the security and safety of the buildings. It ensures that the buildings are maintained in a good condition, and this is monitored through the Trustee meetings. The Trust is confident that there is no RAAC present at either site; confirmation has been received from relevant third parties to this effect.

The Trust has continued to strengthen its risk management throughout the year by improving processes and ensuring staff awareness.

Fundraising

The Trust does not work with external professional fundraisers or companies who carry out fundraising on its behalf. Fundraising undertaken during the year was mainly through external donations received from local organisations. During the prior year, Friends of Brandles School was established, with the aim of fundraising for Brandles School.

Plans for Future Periods

As we move forward as a Trust, having established a strong financial, operational and curriculum foundation, both the Trustees and the ELT are confident in our ability to establish consistent procedures, best practice sharing and continued pupil places growth.

Educational excellence is constantly at the forefront of the Trust's ambition. In the next three years the Trust intends to:

- Create a high-performing workforce and culture that promotes collaboration, aspiration and support
- Positively contribute to the wider education system by providing high-quality training and/or placements for trainee teachers and support for early career teachers through the Early Career Framework

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

- Retain and promote quality staff across our schools and Trust
- Centralise EHCPs to form the basis of all that we do
- Expand our external support functions, including our Outreach, Adapted Meaningful Opportunities, and Pathways programmes.

The Trust intends to grow the number of pupils we serve with a focus on special provision by:

- Improving and expanding current facilities
- Developing a scalable central function and offer
- Reviewing and developing our outward facing profile and brand to ensure it better reflects what the Trust does and represents
- Providing for co-education at secondary level
- Promoting the Trust to schools who would like to join.

The Trust seeks to re-invest any surpluses generated, for investment either in the current period or in the future, and to provide centralised services that are consistent with Trust objectives through economies of scale (cost reduction) and economies of scope (access to more services).

Our overall aim is to continue to be a high-performing Trust, offering a safe, calm and secure environment for our pupils to thrive and succeed in every aspect of school life. We will continue to be a place where all students attend regularly, and all children leave our schools well prepared for the next stage of education, employment or training and to become confident citizens.

Funds Held as Custodian Trustee on Behalf of Others

The Trust does not hold funds on behalf of third parties.

Employees and Disabled Persons Employee Involvement

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, shared online documents and staff meetings.

At the schools, information is channelled via the SLT meetings. Employees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with Ofsted reports, available from the Trust website and pupil progress and attainment statistics when they are made available.

Equal Opportunities Policy

It is the Trust's policy to ensure equality of opportunities is afforded to staff, students, and other stakeholders. Training, career development and promotion opportunities are available to all employees.

Disabled Persons

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.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Auditor

Insofar as the Trustees are aware:

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

The Trustees' Report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on 11 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Mr D Login
Chair of Trustees

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of responsibility

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

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Executive Headteacher, 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 Larwood 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 6 times during the year.

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

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Mr D Login, Chair of Trustees	6	6
Ms A Cooper	4	4
Ms D Eason	3	6
Mr S Marchant	4	6
Mrs W Openshaw	3	6
Mrs J Sharp	4	6
Mr D Wickham	6	6
Ms K Coulson	0	2
Ms R Ashmore	5	6

Review of year:

In the last year, Larwood Academy Trust experienced a period of relative stability in its governance, following several years of notable changes in the composition of its Board of Trustees. Previous years saw the introduction of new Trustees with expertise in audit, education, HR and IT and the departure of long-serving members, which reshaped the Board's structure and approach. However, this year has been characterised by continuity, allowing the Board to build on the foundations established by these earlier changes. This stability has enabled Trustees to focus more deeply on strategic priorities without the need for major adjustments in leadership or governance structures.

Although no formal external review or evaluation of the Board's performance took place during the last year, the Trust continued to strengthen its governance by implementing recommendations from a previous external review. These improvements have reinforced key areas such as financial oversight, safeguarding and Trustee engagement.

As a social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) provision, the Trust continues to face specific challenges in meeting the diverse needs of its pupils, particularly in light of increasing demands for specialised support. The Board has been focused on ensuring that resources and staff development align with these needs, while also addressing broader educational challenges such as curriculum development and mental health support frameworks. Despite these pressures, the Board has continued to rely on high-quality data, valued for its accuracy and relevance, which has been essential in guiding informed decisions that enhance both governance and the quality of the SEMH education provided by the Trust.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Governance (continued)

Conflicts of interest:

The Trust manages conflicts of interest through a robust policy and by maintaining an up-to-date and complete register of interests. Relevant details from this register are shared across the organisation as appropriate. The Trust continues to collect enhanced data in relation to close family members of Members, Trustees and Key Management Personnel.

Governance reviews:

During the last year, no formal evaluation or external review of the Board of Trustees' impact and effectiveness was conducted. However, the Trust has continued to monitor governance practices informally, ensuring ongoing improvements. The last formal review, conducted in 2022/23, provided valuable recommendations that the Board has actively implemented, strengthening its governance framework. The Trust plans to carry out its next formal self-evaluation and external review of governance in the 2025/26 academic year as part of its broader internal scrutiny work. This upcoming review will be a crucial step in assessing the Board's ongoing performance and identifying areas for further enhancement.

Committees

The Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to oversee and monitor finance and operational, human resources, health and safety and premises management across the schools within the Trust.

During the year the following issues were dealt with by the committee:

- Developing and recommending comprehensive financial plans aligned with the Trust's strategic goals.
- Monitoring and controlling budgets to ensure efficient resource allocation and financial sustainability.
- Reviewing and advising on procurement strategies to optimise cost-effectiveness and value for money.
- Overseeing HR policies, including recruitment, staff development and compliance with employment laws.
- Overseeing the effective use of premises and resources, including oversight of capital expenditure projects.
- Ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations and promoting a safe environment for all.

During the year the following changes to the committee took place:

Ms A Cooper stepped down from the committee and the Trust is actively seeking a new trustee with skills and experience in HR or premises management to succeed her.

Attendance during the year at meetings was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Mr D Login	4	4
Mrs J Sharp	4	4
Ms A Cooper	3	3

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is also a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to oversee and monitor financial, governance, risk management and internal control systems across the schools within the Trust.

During the year the following issues were dealt with by the committee:

- Advising on the effectiveness and resources of the external auditors, reviewing their plans and findings and ensuring there was coordination with the annual programme of internal scrutiny.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Governance (continued)

- Examining and reviewing systems and methods of control both financial and otherwise and ensuring the Trust was complying with the Department for Education's overall requirements for internal scrutiny.
- Overseeing and reviewing the Trust's risk register and commissioning audit work which was objective and independent, covering systems, controls and transactions and tailored to the Trust and its risks.
- Encouraging a culture whereby each individual felt that they have a part to play in guarding the probity of the Trust and could take any concerns or worries to an appropriate member of Executive Leadership Team (ELT) or in exceptional circumstances directly to the Board.

During the year the following changes to the committee took place:

Mr D Wickham assumed the role of chair of the committee, bringing with him extensive leadership experience in risk management, corporate governance, performance monitoring, information security, GDPR compliance and audits.

Attendance during the year at meetings was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Mr D Login	4	4
Mr D Wickham	4	4
Mr S Marchant	3	4
Ms K Coulson	0	2

Review of value for money

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

The Accounting Officer considers how the Trust's use of 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 for the Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- Exploring opportunities to increase pupil numbers across schools, enhancing both community support and the financial sustainability of the Trust.
- Continuing the centralisation of non-educational functions within the Trust, streamlining operations and reducing costs through shared services.
- Implementing recommendations from the pay and benefits review to ensure equity and consistency across roles, while also optimising staff retention and satisfaction.
- Strengthening procurement practices to secure better value contracts and services, contributing to more efficient resource management.
- Enhancing the Trust's digital infrastructure, reducing administrative overheads and improving overall operational efficiency.
- Developing and implementing the Estates Vision and Strategy and Trust Asset Plan, ensuring that capital projects and related expenditure are aligned with the wider Trust strategy.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

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 Larwood Academy Trust for the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to handle risk

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the 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 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

The risk and control framework

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

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees
- regular reviews by the Finance and 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
- identification and management of risks

The Board of Trustees has decided to buy-in internal audit services from Breathe Technology Limited, Herts for Learning and Pay in Education.

These options have been chosen because these providers have the necessary expertise, ensure a breadth of service that meets our diverse needs, are cost-effective and leverage a deep understanding of the Trust's specific requirements.

The internal audit services in the year included giving advice on financial and other matters and performing a range of checks on the Trust's financial and other systems. In particular, the checks carried out in the current period included:

- IT and cyber security (Breathe Technology)
- Pay and benefits (Pay in Education)
- Safeguarding (Herts for Learning)

On an annual basis, the reviewer reports to the Board of Trustees through the Audit and Risk Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities. On an annual basis the Audit and Risk Committee receives a summary report outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

The risk and control framework (continued)

The following issues have arisen from the internal auditors' work and the following remedial actions have or are being taken to address these:

IT and cyber security

- The penetration test revealed vulnerabilities in firewall rules, including outdated and unused configurations therefore firewall rules will be cleaned up, unused rules removed and ongoing management of firewall settings will be overseen by a designated security manager.
- The Trust's response to a simulated phishing attack was swift, but the audit revealed room for improvement in ongoing staff awareness and training with regular phishing simulations and awareness programmes planned for the future to maintain vigilance.
- There were inconsistencies in security setups between schools, particularly in terms of software and system configuration so a standardised solution has been deployed across both schools, with centralised cloud management to address these inconsistencies.
- The audit highlighted the need for clearly defined IT management and cyber security roles, recommending a designated team to take responsibility for ongoing security oversight.
- The audit found gaps in the backup and disaster recovery processes, especially in meeting government guidelines for offline backups. The Trust will implement a robust backup and disaster recovery plan, ensuring compliance with NCSC and DFE standards.

Pay and benefits

- Certain leadership and support staff salaries were found to be misaligned with market benchmarks, either falling below or exceeding sector norms and so the Trust has conducted a review and realignment of salary structures to ensure consistency and fairness across all roles.
- Performance-based bonuses were distributed unevenly across different teams, with unclear or inconsistent criteria for awarding these bonuses. Therefore the Trust has standardised the criteria for awarding performance-related bonuses to ensure fair and transparent distribution.
- There were inefficiencies in the centralisation of HR, finance, and other operational functions. The Trust has continued to streamline these functions and will conduct ongoing reviews to identify further opportunities for improvement.

Review of effectiveness

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

- the work of the internal auditors;
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process;
- the work of the executive managers within the Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.
- the work of the external auditors;
- correspondence from ESFA.

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

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Review of effectiveness (continued)

Conclusion

Based on the advice of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Accounting Officer, the Board of Trustees is of the opinion that the Trust has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control.

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

Mr D Login
Chair of Trustees

Mr P Van De Merwe
Accounting Officer

Date: 11 December 2024

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

As Accounting Officer of Larwood 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, including for estates safety and management, 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 2023, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

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 2023.

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

Mr P Van De Merwe
Accounting Officer

Date: 11 December 2024

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

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 2023 to 2024;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charitable Company will continue in business.

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

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that in its conduct and operation the Charitable Company applies financial and other controls, which conform with the requirements both of propriety and of good financial management. They are also responsible for ensuring 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 and signed on its behalf by:

Mr D Login
Chair of Trustees

Date: 11 December 2024

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Larwood Academy Trust (the 'Trust') for the year ended 31 August 2024 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 2023 to 2024 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 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 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.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF
LARWOOD 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.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF
LARWOOD 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 Board meetings and other relevant sub-committees of the Board such as the Finance Committee 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.

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

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

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

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 (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of

Price Bailey LLP

Statutory Auditors
Causeway House
1 Dane Street
Bishop's Stortford
Hertfordshire
CM23 3BT

12 December 2024

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 24 May 2023 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Larwood Academy Trust during the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

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

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of Larwood Academy Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 1 November 2016 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2023, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Approach

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

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

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

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

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

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 2023 to 31 August 2024 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Reporting Accountant
Price Bailey LLP

Date: 12 December 2024

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	2	-	-	15,937	15,937	528,397
Other trading activities	4	68,939	8,247	-	77,186	72,997
Investments	5	6,385	-	-	6,385	297
Charitable activities	3	-	4,807,277	-	4,807,277	4,398,010
Total income		75,324	4,815,524	15,937	4,906,785	4,999,701
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	7	59,632	4,549,665	512,464	5,121,761	5,611,144
Total expenditure		59,632	4,549,665	512,464	5,121,761	5,611,144
Net income/ (expenditure)		15,692	265,859	(496,527)	(214,976)	(611,443)
Transfers between funds	17	400	(74,547)	74,147	-	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		16,092	191,312	(422,380)	(214,976)	(611,443)
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	24	-	76,000	-	76,000	513,000
Net movement in funds		16,092	267,312	(422,380)	(138,976)	(98,443)
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		314,763	159,547	12,656,309	13,130,619	13,229,062
Net movement in funds		16,092	267,312	(422,380)	(138,976)	(98,443)
Total funds carried forward		330,855	426,859	12,233,929	12,991,643	13,130,619

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

The notes on pages 30 to 56 form part of these financial statements.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 10359418

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	13	12,411,575	12,834,248
Current assets			
Debtors	14	106,032	232,949
Cash at bank and in hand		1,173,163	845,844
		1,279,195	1,078,793
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	15	(524,701)	(463,922)
Net current assets		754,494	614,871
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	16	(174,426)	(194,500)
Net assets excluding pension liability		12,991,643	13,254,619
Defined benefit pension scheme asset / liability	24	-	(124,000)
Total net assets		12,991,643	13,130,619
Funds of the Trust			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	17	12,233,929	12,656,309
Restricted income funds	17	426,859	283,547
		12,660,788	12,939,856
Restricted funds excluding pension liability			
Pension reserve	17	-	(124,000)
Total restricted funds		12,660,788	12,815,856
Unrestricted income funds	17	330,855	314,763
Total funds		12,991,643	13,130,619

The financial statements on pages 27 to 56 were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and are signed on their behalf, by:

Mr D Login
Chair of Trustees

Date: 11 December 2024

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	19	400,663	299,406
Cash flows from investing activities			
	21	(56,577)	(716,749)
Cash flows from financing activities			
	20	(16,767)	211
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		327,319	(417,132)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		845,844	1,262,976
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	22, 23	<u>1,173,163</u>	<u>845,844</u>

The notes on pages 30 to 56 form part of these financial statements

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1. Accounting policies

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

1.1 Basis of preparation 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 2023 to 2024 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

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

1.2 Company status

The Trust is a Company limited by guarantee. The Members of the Company are named on page 1. In the event of the Trust being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per Member.

The registered office of the Trust is Larwood Drive, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 5BZ.

1.3 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.

1.4 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.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.5 Income

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

• **Grants**

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

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

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

• **Donations**

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

• **Other income**

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

1.6 Expenditure

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

• **Charitable activities**

These are costs incurred on the 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.

1.7 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.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.8 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	- 20 - 50 years straight line
Long-term leasehold property	- 125 years straight line
Furniture and equipment	- 5-10 years straight line
Computer equipment	- 4-10 years straight line

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.

1.9 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.

1.10 Cash at bank and in hand

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

1.11 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.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.12 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.

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.

1.13 Operating leases

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

1.14 Pensions

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 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.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1.15 Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

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

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 2024. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

At the balance sheet date 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 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.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

2. Income from donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Donations	-	-	-	-	448,526
Capital grants	-	-	15,937	15,937	79,871
Total 2024	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>15,937</u>	<u>15,937</u>	<u>528,397</u>
Total 2023	<u>3,244</u>	<u>1,470</u>	<u>523,683</u>	<u>528,397</u>	

In 2023, income from donations was £448,526, £4,714 of which was restricted and £443,812 was restricted fixed assets.

In 2023, income from capital grants was £79,871, all of which was in relation to restricted fixed assets.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

3. Funding for the Trust's charitable activities

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Provision of Education			
DfE/ESFA grants			
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,600,000	1,600,000	1,600,000
Other DfE/ESFA grants			
Other DfE/ESFA grants	20,532	20,532	16,499
Pupil premium	142,643	142,643	144,683
National tutoring	17,273	17,273	44,848
Recovery premium	58,515	58,515	58,734
	<u>1,838,963</u>	<u>1,838,963</u>	<u>1,864,764</u>
Other Government grants			
Local Authority grants	2,960,964	2,960,964	2,533,246
	<u>2,960,964</u>	<u>2,960,964</u>	<u>2,533,246</u>
Other income	7,350	7,350	-
	<u>4,807,277</u>	<u>4,807,277</u>	<u>4,398,010</u>
Total 2024	<u><u>4,807,277</u></u>	<u><u>4,807,277</u></u>	<u><u>4,398,010</u></u>
Total 2023	<u><u>4,398,010</u></u>	<u><u>4,398,010</u></u>	

In 2023, income from the DfE/ESFA of £1,864,764 was all restricted.

In 2023, income from Other Government Grants of £2,533,246 was all restricted.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

4. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Hire of facilities	40,992	-	40,992	27,876
Rental income	19,062	-	19,062	16,110
Other income	8,885	8,247	17,132	29,011
Total 2024	<u>68,939</u>	<u>8,247</u>	<u>77,186</u>	<u>72,997</u>
Total 2023	<u>65,887</u>	<u>7,110</u>	<u>72,997</u>	

In 2023, income from other trading activities was £72,997, of which £7,110 was restricted and £65,887 was unrestricted.

5. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Bank interest	6,385	6,385	297
Total 2024	<u>6,385</u>	<u>6,385</u>	<u>297</u>
Total 2023	<u>297</u>	<u>297</u>	

In 2023, investment income was unrestricted.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

6. Expenditure

	Staff Costs 2024 £	Premises 2024 £	Other 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Direct costs	3,198,808	-	132,995	3,331,803	3,187,240
Support costs	582,942	811,531	395,485	1,789,958	2,423,904
Total 2024	<u><u>3,781,750</u></u>	<u><u>811,531</u></u>	<u><u>528,480</u></u>	<u><u>5,121,761</u></u>	<u><u>5,611,144</u></u>
Total 2023	<u><u>3,633,610</u></u>	<u><u>1,341,207</u></u>	<u><u>636,327</u></u>	<u><u>5,611,144</u></u>	

In 2024, of total expenditure, £59,632 (2023: £7,419) was from unrestricted funds, £4,549,665 (2023: £4,608,674) was from restricted funds and £512,464 (2023: £995,051) was from restricted fixed asset funds.

In 2023, direct costs consisted of £3,052,126 staff costs and £135,114 other costs. Support costs consisted of £581,484 staff costs, £1,341,207 premises costs and £501,213 other costs.

7. Charitable activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Direct costs	3,331,803	3,187,240
Support costs	1,789,958	2,423,904
	<u><u>5,121,761</u></u>	<u><u>5,611,144</u></u>

	2024 £	2023 £
Analysis of support costs		
Support staff costs	582,942	581,484
Depreciation	494,075	407,969
Governance costs	52,363	68,070
Technology costs	53,291	36,908
Premises costs (excluding depreciation)	317,454	933,238
Other support costs	285,209	393,189
Legal costs	4,624	3,046
	<u><u>1,789,958</u></u>	<u><u>2,423,904</u></u>

In 2023, premises costs were significantly higher due to the CIF roof project expenditure not being capitalised.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

8. Net income/(expenditure)

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Operating lease rentals	20,096	18,141
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	494,075	407,969
Fees paid to Auditors for:		
- audit	10,575	9,885
- other services	9,450	8,830
	9,450	8,830

9. Staff

a. Staff costs and employee benefits

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	2,915,722	2,697,790
Social security costs	287,914	260,409
Pension costs	577,289	560,051
	3,780,925	3,518,250
Agency staff costs	825	108,835
Staff restructuring costs	-	6,525
	3,781,750	3,633,610

b. Staff numbers

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

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Teaching	27	25
Admin & Support	56	56
Management	8	8
	91	89

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

9. Staff (continued)

c. Higher paid staff

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

	2024 No.	2023 No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	1	2
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	2	2
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	2	1
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	1	-
	1	-

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 key management personnel benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Trust was £699,148 (2023 - £836,619).

Included in this figure are employer national insurance contributions of £64,506 (2023 - £77,333) and employer pension contributions of £101,692 (2023 - £113,031).

10. Central services

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

- Financial services
- HR
- Audit
- Legal services
- Operational support services

The Trust charges for these services on the following basis:

All central services are paid through Larwood School. Brandles School pays 3% of its income (GAG and LA Top Up) as a Top Slice payment. This is charged monthly, since September 2023.

The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Brandles School	52,061	-
	52,061	-

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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 Chief Executive Officer and other staff Trustees only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of Chief Executive Officer and staff members under their contracts of employment. The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

		2024	2023
		£	£
Mr M Slater (resigned 18 February 2023)	Remuneration	-	50,000 - 55,000
	Pension contributions paid	-	10,000 - 15,000

During the year ended 31 August 2024, expenses relating to travel totalling £684 were reimbursed or paid directly to 2 Trustees (2023 - £545 to 1 Trustee).

12. Trustees' and Officers' insurance

The Trust has opted into the Department of Education's risk protection arrangement (RPA), an alternative to insurance where UK Government funds cover losses that arise. This scheme protects Trustees, Governors and Officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Academy business, and provides cover up to £10,000,000.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

13. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold property £	Long-term leasehold property £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation					
At 1 September 2023	6,158,555	8,113,780	244,848	200,977	14,718,160
Additions	66,807	5,707	-	-	72,514
Disposals	(1,410)	-	(806)	(17,325)	(19,541)
At 31 August 2024	6,223,952	8,119,487	244,042	183,652	14,771,133
Depreciation					
At 1 September 2023	1,217,047	407,928	110,683	148,254	1,883,912
Charge for the year	270,413	172,672	28,403	22,589	494,077
On disposals	(428)	-	(806)	(17,197)	(18,431)
At 31 August 2024	1,487,032	580,600	138,280	153,646	2,359,558
Net book value					
At 31 August 2024	4,736,920	7,538,887	105,762	30,006	12,411,575
At 31 August 2023	4,941,508	7,705,852	134,165	52,723	12,834,248

Included in the value of freehold property is land of £875,000 (2023 - £875,000) which is not depreciated.

14. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	8,112	-
Other debtors	-	36,982
Prepayments and accrued income	63,545	83,044
VAT recoverable	34,375	112,923
	106,032	232,949

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

15. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
CIF loan	21,253	17,946
Trade creditors	145,717	148,097
Other taxation and social security	77,558	58,105
Other creditors	58,733	57,003
Accruals and deferred income	221,440	182,771
	524,701	463,922
	524,701	463,922
	2024 £	2023 £
Deferred income brought forward	-	100
Resources deferred during the year	104,387	-
Amounts released from previous periods	-	(100)
	104,387	-
	104,387	-

The deferred income relates to the teachers pay and pension grant received from the Local Authority which relates to 24/25.

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

	2024 £	2023 £
CIF loan	174,426	194,500
	174,426	194,500

The above balance includes two CIF loans with the ESFA. Both loans are repayable over 10 years with an interest rate of 1.49%. Loan 1 matures September 2033 and Loan 2 matures September 2032, in line with the ESFA schedule.

Included within the above are amounts falling due as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Between one and two years		
CIF loan	22,348	21,253
	22,348	21,253
Between two and five years		
CIF loan	63,759	63,759
	63,759	63,759
Over five years		
CIF loan	88,319	109,488
	88,319	109,488

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

17. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2024 £
Unrestricted						
Unrestricted	314,763	75,324	(59,632)	400	-	330,855
Restricted						
GAG	151,387	1,600,000	(1,391,442)	(74,147)	-	285,798
Other DfE/ESFA	-	96,320	(96,320)	-	-	-
Pupil Premium	-	142,643	(142,643)	-	-	-
SEN funding	-	2,496,390	(2,496,390)	-	-	-
Other						
Government	124,848	234,242	(224,941)	-	-	134,149
Teacher pay & pension grant	-	230,332	(230,332)	-	-	-
Restricted donations	7,312	-	-	(400)	-	6,912
Other restricted	-	7,350	(7,350)	-	-	-
Trip income	-	8,247	(8,247)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(124,000)	-	48,000	-	76,000	-
	<u>159,547</u>	<u>4,815,524</u>	<u>(4,549,665)</u>	<u>(74,547)</u>	<u>76,000</u>	<u>426,859</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Fixed assets	12,834,248	-	(494,075)	71,402	-	12,411,575
DFC	-	15,937	-	(14,022)	-	1,915
Other ESFA capital grants	5,701	-	(5,701)	-	-	-
CIF funding	11,336	-	(11,336)	-	-	-
LA capital income	17,470	-	(1,352)	-	-	16,118
CIF loan	(212,446)	-	-	16,767	-	(195,679)
	<u>12,656,309</u>	<u>15,937</u>	<u>(512,464)</u>	<u>74,147</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,233,929</u>
Total Restricted funds	<u>12,815,856</u>	<u>4,831,461</u>	<u>(5,062,129)</u>	<u>(400)</u>	<u>76,000</u>	<u>12,660,788</u>
Total funds	<u><u>13,130,619</u></u>	<u><u>4,906,785</u></u>	<u><u>(5,121,761)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>76,000</u></u>	<u><u>12,991,643</u></u>

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

17. Statement of funds (continued)

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

General Annual Grant (GAG)

This represents funding from the ESFA to cover the costs of recurrent expenditure. The Trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG that it could carry forward at 31 August 2024. Transfers represent contributions to fixed assets and CIF loan repayments.

Other DFE/ESFA grants

Other DFE/ESFA grants represents other funding from the ESFA to be used for specific purposes.

Pupil Premium

This represents funding to be used to help raise achievement and improve outcomes for pupils from low income families who are eligible for free school meals.

SEN funding

This represents allocated funding for special educational needs pupils, transport services, residential operations and strategic school development.

Other Government grants

This represents funding from the Local Authority including outreach services.

Teacher pay and pension grants

This represents funding from the Local Authority to support the Trust with the cost of the teachers' pay award and increase in the employer contributions of the TPS.

Restricted donations

This represents donations received which are restricted for specific purposes.

It was noted in the current year, that £400 was incorrectly classified in the prior year and a transfer has been made to correctly reflect the unrestricted nature of the donations.

Other restricted

This represents other income generated which is restricted for specific activities.

Trip donations

This represents contributions made by parents to trips and the associated costs of running the trips.

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)

The Trust is to use the DFC allocation to maintain and improve its buildings and facilities.

Condition Improvement Fund (CIF)

This relates to four CIF projects. Fire safety and roof works at each school.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

17. Statement of funds (continued)

Other ESFA capital grants

This represents funding received for the Space Hub.

Local Authority capital income

This represents a grant received from the local authority towards new classrooms.

CIF Loan

This amount represents two CIF loans with the ESFA. Both loans are repayable over 10 years with an interest rate of 1.49%. Loan 1 matures September 2033 and Loan 2 matures September 2032.

Restricted fixed asset funds

Restricted fixed asset funds represent resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by the DfE/ESFA.

Pension reserve

This fund represents the Trust's share of the deficit on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

Unrestricted funds

This represents income received that does not have restrictions.

It was noted in the current year, that £400 was incorrectly classified in the prior year and a transfer has been made to correctly reflect the unrestricted nature of the donations.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

17. Statement of funds (continued)

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

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
Unrestricted						
Unrestricted	382,700	66,184	(7,419)	(126,702)	-	314,763
Restricted general funds						
GAG	155,973	1,600,000	(1,536,634)	(67,952)	-	151,387
Other DfE/ESFA	-	120,081	(120,081)	-	-	-
Pupil Premium	-	144,683	(144,683)	-	-	-
SEN funding	176,965	2,151,172	(2,328,137)	-	-	-
Other Government	92,352	382,074	(349,578)	-	-	124,848
Teacher pay & pension grant	63,614	-	(63,614)	-	-	-
Restricted donations	5,435	4,714	(2,837)	-	-	7,312
Other restricted	-	7,110	(7,110)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(581,000)	-	(56,000)	-	513,000	(124,000)
	(86,661)	4,409,834	(4,608,674)	(67,952)	513,000	159,547
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Fixed assets	12,011,162	443,812	(407,969)	787,243	-	12,834,248
DFC	-	48,823	-	(48,823)	-	-
Other ESFA capital	38,232	-	(12,594)	(19,937)	-	5,701
CIF funding	883,629	(5,952)	(564,958)	(301,383)	-	11,336
LA capital	-	37,000	(9,530)	(10,000)	-	17,470
CIF loan	-	-	-	(212,446)	-	(212,446)
	12,933,023	523,683	(995,051)	194,654	-	12,656,309
Total Restricted funds	12,846,362	4,933,517	(5,603,725)	126,702	513,000	12,815,856
Total funds	13,229,062	4,999,701	(5,611,144)	-	513,000	13,130,619

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

17. Statement of funds (continued)

Total funds analysis by Academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were allocated as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Larwood School	539,363	448,717
Brandles School	218,351	149,593
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve	757,714	598,310
Restricted fixed asset fund	12,233,929	12,656,309
Pension reserve	-	(124,000)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	12,991,643	13,130,619
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

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 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Larwood School	1,830,243	440,288	28,581	455,988	2,755,100	2,822,026
Brandles School	1,368,565	142,654	29,564	331,803	1,872,586	2,381,149
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Trust	3,198,808	582,942	58,145	787,791	4,627,686	5,203,175
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LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

18. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current period

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	12,411,575	12,411,575
Current assets	330,855	930,307	18,033	1,279,195
Creditors due within one year	-	(503,448)	(21,253)	(524,701)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	-	(174,426)	(174,426)
Total	<u>330,855</u>	<u>426,859</u>	<u>12,233,929</u>	<u>12,991,643</u>

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior period

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	12,834,248	12,834,248
Current assets	314,763	626,366	137,664	1,078,793
Creditors due within one year	-	(342,819)	(121,103)	(463,922)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	-	(194,500)	(194,500)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(124,000)	-	(124,000)
Total	<u>314,763</u>	<u>159,547</u>	<u>12,656,309</u>	<u>13,130,619</u>

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Net expenditure for the period (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	(214,976)	(611,443)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	494,075	407,969
Capital grants from DfE & LA	(15,937)	(79,871)
Interest receivable	-	(297)
LGPS adjustment	(48,000)	56,000
Decrease in debtors	126,917	1,541,456
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	57,472	(579,973)
Loss/(profit) on disposal of fixed assets	1,112	(623)
Donated assets	-	(433,812)
Net cash provided by operating activities	400,663	299,406

20. Cash flows from financing activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Interest received	-	297
Repayment of CIF loan	(16,767)	(86)
Net cash (used in)/provided by financing activities	(16,767)	211

21. Cash flows from investing activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(72,514)	(796,620)
Capital grants from DfE Group	15,937	42,871
Capital grants from Local Authority	-	37,000
Net cash used in investing activities	(56,577)	(716,749)

22. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash in hand and at bank	1,173,163	845,844

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

23. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 September 2023 £	Cash flows £	At 31 August 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	845,844	327,319	1,173,163
Debt due within 1 year	(17,946)	(4,267)	(22,213)
Debt due after 1 year	(194,500)	20,074	(174,426)
	<u>633,398</u>	<u>343,126</u>	<u>976,524</u>

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 Hertfordshire County Council. Both are multi-employer defined benefit schemes.

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

Contributions amounting to £56,411 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2024 (2023 - £56,734) 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.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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 ensure scheme costs are recognised and managed appropriately and the review specifies the level of future contributions.

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

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

The next valuation result was implemented from 1 April 2024. The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2028.

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £335,691 (2023 - £271,376).

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

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The Trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan. Accordingly, the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The 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 2024 was £376,000 (2023 - £314,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £293,000 (2023 - £246,000) and employees' contributions totalled £ 83,000 (2023 - £68,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 21.65 per cent for employers and 5.5 - 12.5 per cent for employees.

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

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

24. Pension commitments (continued)

Principal actuarial assumptions

	2024	2023
	%	%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.15	3.45
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.65	2.95
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.00	5.20

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

	2024	2023
	Years	Years
Retiring today		
Males	21.2-21.5	21.3-21.6
Females	24.2-24.3	24.2-24.3
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	21.4-22.2	21.5-22.3
Females	25.3	25.4

As at 31 August 2024, the Trust had a pension liability of £Nil (2023 - £124,000). The sensitivity analysis detailed below would increase / (decrease) the closing defined benefit obligation in the following way:

Sensitivity analysis

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
Discount rate +0.1%	(84)	(73)
Discount rate -0.1%	84	73
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	133	116
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	(133)	(116)
CPI rate +0.1%	80	65
CPI rate -0.1%	(80)	(65)

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

24. Pension commitments (continued)

Share of scheme assets

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

	At 31 August 2024 £	At 31 August 2023 £
Equities	1,938,000	1,413,000
Bonds	902,000	665,000
Property	401,000	388,000
Cash and other liquid assets	100,000	304,000
Total market value of assets	3,341,000	2,770,000

The actual return on scheme assets was £265,000 (2023 - £-74,000).

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Current service cost	(238,000)	(277,000)
Past service cost	(2,000)	-
Interest income	153,000	109,000
Interest cost	(158,000)	(134,000)
Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities	(245,000)	(302,000)

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	2,894,000	2,988,000
Current service cost	238,000	277,000
Past service cost	2,000	-
Interest cost	158,000	134,000
Employee contributions	83,000	68,000
Actuarial gains	(4,000)	(556,000)
Benefits paid	(30,000)	(17,000)
At 31 August	3,341,000	2,894,000

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

24. Pension commitments (continued)

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	2,770,000	2,407,000
Interest income	153,000	109,000
Actuarial gains/(losses)	72,000	(43,000)
Employer contributions	293,000	246,000
Employee contributions	83,000	68,000
Benefits paid	(30,000)	(17,000)
At 31 August	<u>3,341,000</u>	<u>2,770,000</u>

25. Operating lease commitments

At 31 August 2024 the Trust had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Not later than 1 year	10,531	14,609
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	7,607	12,113
	<u>18,138</u>	<u>26,722</u>

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 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 cease to be a Member.

LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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.

During the year the Trust paid £Nil (2023: £392) to Sweet O'Clock Limited, a company solely owned by the wife of Mr P Van Der Merwe (Accounting Officer). There were no amounts outstanding at 31 August 2024 (2023: £Nil).

During the year the Trust paid £Nil (2023: £350) to Drance Entertainment, a business owned by the brother-in-law of Mrs B Osobu who is part of the Trust's key management personnel and Head of School at Larwood. There were no amounts outstanding at 31 August 2024 (2023: £Nil).

In entering into these transactions, the Trust has complied with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook.

The husband and mother of B Osobu, who is part of the key management personnel of the Trust, are employed by the Trust as staff members on contracts approved by Trustees. Their remuneration package is in line with the standard payscales for the roles undertaken and their contracts of employment are subject to the normal terms and conditions.

No further related party transactions took place in the period of account, other than certain trustees' remuneration and expenses already disclosed in note 11.