

# United Church Schools Trust

England & Wales · Charity number 1016538

## Details

---

Other names	CHURCH SCHOOLS COMPANY, THE CHURCH SCHOOLS COMPANY, THE UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	<a href="#">02780748</a>
Registered	1993-01-21
Register	<a href="#">View on the Charity Commission register</a>

## Contact

---

Address	United Learning Worldwide House Thorpe Wood Peterborough PE3 6SB
Phone	01832864477
Email	<a href="mailto:enquiries@unitedlearning.org.uk">enquiries@unitedlearning.org.uk</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.unitedlearning.org.uk">www.unitedlearning.org.uk</a>

## Activities

---

**Objects:** TO PROVIDE IN ENGLAND AND WALES, BY THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOLS, A LIBERAL, PRACTICAL, AND GENERAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS OF ALL AGES AND BOTH SEXES, SUCH EDUCATION TO INCLUDE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE DOCTRINE AND DUTY OF CHRISTIANITY PRINCIPALLY AS THE SAME ARE TAUGHT BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, AND OTHERWISE TO PROMOTE THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOLS CONDUCTED, OR TO BE CONDUCTED, BY ANY CHARITABLE INSTITUTION

**Activities:** The provision of a liberal, practical and general education, which includes religious instruction in the doctrine and duties of Christianity, through the operation of independent schools.

## Classification

---

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** Education/training
- **Who:** Children/young People

## Geography

---

- Cambridgeshire
- Dorset
- East Riding Of Yorkshire
- Hampshire
- Hertfordshire
- Kent
- Lancashire
- Lincolnshire
- Southwark
- Surrey

## Finances

---

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-08-31	£185,221,000	£174,415,000	£61,540,000	2581
2024-08-31	£175,965,000	£157,674,000	£50,787,000	2455
2023-08-31	£144,154,000	£140,199,000	£32,607,000	2349
2022-08-31	£130,332,000	£123,929,000	£28,533,000	2241
2021-08-31	£121,961,000	£119,955,000	£21,068,000	2408
2020-08-31	£114,470,000	£117,403,000	£18,641,000	2550

## Trustees

---

Name	Role	Appointed
Christian Norman Brodie		2025-10-02
Dame Reena Keeble		2025-10-02
Dr ROSALIND GIVEN-WILSON		2025-10-02
JOSEPH BENJAMIN GORDON		2025-10-02
Melissa Geiger		2025-10-02
Paul Stuart Mustow		2025-10-02

## Linked charities

---

- TRUST PROPERTY HELD IN CONNECTION WITH CHAFYN GROVE SCHOOL (1016538-1)

**United Church Schools Trust**

England & Wales - Charity number 1016538

---

# Accounts

---

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**CONTENTS**

---

	Page
<b>Reference and administrative details of the Company, its Trustees and advisers</b>	1 - 2
<b>Trustees' report</b>	3 - 26
<b>Independent auditor's report on the financial statements</b>	27 - 31
<b>Statement of financial activities</b>	32 - 34
<b>Balance sheet</b>	35 - 36
<b>Statement of cash flows</b>	37
<b>Notes to the financial statements</b>	38 - 69

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**Trustees**

Mr Christian Brodie  
Mrs Melissa Geiger  
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson, Chair  
Mr Ben Gordon  
Dame Reena Keeble  
Mr Paul Mustow (appointed 13 February 2025)  
Dr Zoe Asensio-Sanchez (resigned 24 September 2024)

Biographies for Trustees can be found at [www.unitedlearning.org.uk](http://www.unitedlearning.org.uk)

**Company registered  
number**

02780748

**Charity registered  
number**

1016538

**Registered office**

Worldwide House  
Thorpe Wood  
Peterborough  
PE3 6SB

**Company secretary**

Mrs Alison Hussain

**Chief executive officer**

Sir Jon Coles

**Senior management  
team**

Sir Jon Coles, Chief Executive Officer  
Mr Benjamin Antell, Director of Secondary Education  
Mrs Fiona Boulton, Director of Independent Schools  
Mrs Kate Bradley, Director of HR  
Mr Darran Ellison-Lee, Director of Primary Education  
Mrs Suzanne Howard, Director of Professional Development  
Mrs Louise Johnston, Chief Financial Officer  
Ms Anna Paige, Director of Strategy and Performance  
Ms Lauren Thorpe, Chief Transformation Officer

**Independent auditor**

Grant Thornton UK LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
17th Floor  
103 Colmore Row  
Birmingham  
B3 3AG

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**  
**(CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**Bankers**                      Barclays Bank PLC  
One Snowhill  
Snowhill Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6GN

**Solicitors**                    HCR Hewitsons LLP  
Elgin House  
Billing Road  
Northampton  
NN1 5BA

Stone King LLP  
3rd Floor  
Bateman House  
82-88 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB2 1LQ

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) (the Charitable Company) for the year ended 31 August 2025. The Trustees confirm that the Trustees' Report and financial statements of the Charitable Company comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Charitable Company's governing document and the provisions of 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) ("SORP 2019").

### **About United Learning**

The roots of the United Learning Group can be traced back nearly 140 years. Over this period, we have always focused on meeting the most important social and educational challenges of the day, with the aim of providing excellent education to children and young people across the country. We seek to improve the life chances of all the children and young people we serve and make it our mission to bring out 'the best in everyone' – pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

We provide a broad education, which prepares children and young people to progress in learning and to make a success of their lives. We focus sharply on the evidence of what makes it more likely that children and young people will progress and succeed, apply that to our practice and continue to learn and develop our schools. We make it a priority to provide teachers with excellent professional support and development, so that every child receives an excellent experience.

Our strength as a group of schools lies in the unique collaboration between the state and independent sectors, in our national reach and growing local clusters and in our dedication to excellence and to continuous improvement. We believe that each of our schools is and should be distinctive – each is committed to developing its own strengths and identity while sharing our core values, common principles and a commitment to the highest standards.

As of 31 August 2025, United Learning – the trading name of the Charitable Group – comprises 14 independent schools operated within United Church Schools Trust ("UCST"), 92 state sector academies and 2 standalone nurseries operated within United Learning Trust ("ULT"), and a central office function that serves all our schools. Together, the Group's schools educate around 75,000 children and young people and employ nearly 12,000 members of staff.

### **Constitution and objects**

United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) is registered with the Charity Commission (No. 1016538) and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales), governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended on 18 March 2025. The Charitable Company is established for charitable purposes and in accordance with its Memorandum of Association its principal activity is to provide a liberal, practical and general education for children which includes religious instruction in the doctrine and duties of Christianity.

### **Members of the Board (hereafter called "Trustees")**

The present membership of the Board is set out under Reference and Administrative Details. All Trustees served throughout the year except where indicated.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**Appointment of Trustees**

The Board has the power to appoint any person as an additional Trustee or to fill a casual vacancy. A Trustee holds office for three years, after which they must resign. They may remain in office for a further three years with the consent of the Board. Following this, they shall be eligible for re-election annually upon the proposal of the Chair.

The training and induction provided for new Trustees is dependent upon their existing experience. Where necessary, induction will provide training on charity, educational, legal and financial matters. All new Trustees are given tours of the Charitable Company's schools and the chance to meet with staff and students. They are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role as Trustees. Induction is tailored specifically to the individual. The Company Secretary works with the Trustees to identify training needs and take steps to keep the Trustees updated regarding the regulatory environment.

**Strategic report**

**Strategies and activities**

The principal object of the Charitable Company is set out above.

Founded in 1993 as an educational charity anchored in the Church of England, the Charitable Company manages the operation of a group of Independent Schools to provide education for students of different abilities between the ages of 0 and 18. Its admission policies welcome people from all employment, faiths and backgrounds. In 2001, it created a subsidiary charity, United Learning Trust ("ULT") a multi-academy trust, to extend its work into some of the most challenging inner-city areas through the City Academy programme, and to this day the Charitable Company remains the sponsor of ULT.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

## **Strategic report (continued)**

### **Operating review**

#### **Framework for Excellence**

Our 'Framework for Excellence' is at the heart of everything we do at United Learning. It sets out the five key principles that we believe are vital to an excellent education for children and young people.

#### **Best From Everyone**

Our aim is to bring out the best in everyone. So we must expect the best from everyone, all the time. Every child is a special individual, capable of extraordinary things. Who can know the limits of any child's potential? So, we expect unreasonably - we constantly challenge children to do what they think they can't, to persist, to work hard and to be at their best.

From every adult we expect the same: that they are at their best, expect unreasonably of themselves, are determined and resilient and pass those expectations on to the children in all they do. We act with the utmost love, care and good faith - the highest standards come with the greatest attention to the wellbeing of all.

#### **Powerful Knowledge**

Our most important purpose is to teach young people things they would not learn outside school, which free them to think and act more powerfully in their lives. Words and numbers are our most powerful ways of representing the world. Mastery of language and fluent mathematical skills are therefore our priority. We aim to prepare young people to make a success of their lives: a core entitlement to subject-based learning; the development of talents; an understanding of work and society.

Worthwhile learning is often hard. Inspiring teaching is what gives access to difficult concepts and the thrill of intellectual discovery. Powerful knowledge is not static or backward-looking. It includes the ability to critique, challenge the status quo, think and learn.

#### **Education with Character**

Academic success is very important. Exam passes are an important aspect of that. But there is more to a good education. Our schools also aim to develop character, compassion and service. Young people are expected to contribute to their school and to society; to try things which they think they cannot do; to persist in the face of difficulty; to become resilient in overcoming obstacles; to manage themselves; to work independently on things which challenge them; to work with others and in teams; to be courageous and caring; to lead.

We want young people to look back on a joyful schooling which has inspired and challenged them, given them wide opportunity and prepared them for the ups and downs of life.

#### **Leadership in Every Role**

Our children are leaders of the future. We expect them to start today - taking advantage of structured opportunities to lead and taking responsibility for themselves and others. Every adult in the school is a leader. In every word, tone and gesture, they set direction and expectation. We expect every adult to take responsibility to do what is right for the children.

All those in formal leadership positions create the climate in which others work. They demand the highest standards, build a performance culture, develop their teams and create the space for others to lead. All leaders listen, grow relationships, act with integrity and care and expect the best from themselves and others in building a happy, confident school.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

## **Strategic report (continued)**

### **Continuous Improvement**

However good we are, we can be better. We constantly look for improvements and implement them with pace. We look for ideas for improvement inside the organisation and out; we observe one another; we steal good ideas with pride and look to make them better; we work together to improve.

We always look at the evidence and are rigorous in evaluating impact. We stop or change things which aren't working; we improve things which are. We aim for high leverage: high impact for low effort and low cost. We constantly look to have more impact for less cost and effort and to spend every pound wisely.

### **Achievements and performance**

We continue to follow our five-year strategy, agreed in 2021 and covering the period 2021-2026.

We have a number of performance indicators against which we assess our success and progress in achieving our objectives, covering:

- Delivery of excellent standards of education to children and young people
- Recruitment and retention of high-quality staff, including a strong pipeline of trainee teachers
- Achieving in-year budgets and ensuring that our schools are financially sustainable
- Making a meaningful contribution to the communities our schools serve and the wider education system

Progress against non-financial indicators is set out below, against the relevant areas of our strategy (reporting includes all schools that joined United Learning before September 2024).

### **Great places to learn**

Our schools aim to bring out the best in their pupils, regardless of their starting points or backgrounds, through developing the whole person and preparing young people for success at school and in their lives, through excellent pastoral care and through the quality of relationships and the environment in which their pupils learn.

Our approach to curriculum and teaching, which is seen in all United Learning schools, emphasises deep, subject-based learning, designed to enable young people to master complex ideas and techniques. Every school in the Group receives the challenge and support they need to ensure that across the curriculum, young people access this entitlement, building a strong conceptual framework to which new ideas are added in a logical sequence through skilled teaching, based on Rosenshine's principles of instruction. Over the course of the year we have continued to develop our United Learning Curriculum as a non-compulsory but comprehensive high-quality set of resources and materials available to all teachers in the group.

Performance across our secondary schools at GCSE and A-Level remained broadly stable relative to 2024, maintaining the positive outcomes seen since the resumption of examinations post-pandemic and remaining significantly above national average performance.

At GCSE:

- 26% of all entries achieved grade 9 (27% in 2024)
- 62% of all entries achieved a grade 7 or above (62% in 2024)
- 52% of students achieved a grade 7 or above in both English and maths (49% in 2024)

Overall, at GCSE our schools achieved value-added of 0.62 (meaning that students achieved on average more than half a grade higher in every subject than would have been predicted from their starting point). This was an increase on 2024, when value-added across our schools was 0.55.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**Strategic report (continued)**

At A-Level:

- 54% of entries achieved A\*A grades (52% in 2024)
- 79% of entries achieved A\*B grades (75% in 2024)
- 92% of entries achieved A\*C grades (89% in 2024)

These results mean our schools remain significantly above the national average for all 18 year olds in England, with the gap widening in 2025 despite an overall increase in results nationally.

Overall, at A-Level our schools achieved value-added of 0.22 (meaning that students achieved on average just over a fifth of a grade higher in every subject than would have been predicted from their starting point).

58% of students who left our independent school sixth forms in summer 2025 progressed to Oxbridge or to Russell Group university destinations, with a further 13% progressing to a 'top third' university outside of this group (71% in total, compared to 69% in 2024).

Our 'Pupil Charter' sets out the experiences our schools commit to providing their pupils, through their curricular and co-curricular offer. Children and young people from across our schools participated in a number of Groupwide events and initiatives during the year such as the annual International Art Competition, the StorySLAM creative writing competition and Student Leadership Programmes for primary pupils and secondary pupils. A highlight of the year was the Magic Flute Project which was delivered in partnership with the Royal Ballet and Opera and aimed to introduce pupils to opera and the performing arts. Over 2,200 pupils participated in this national project which began with a 'Big Sing' takeover of the Royal Opera House in April and culminated in three regional performances in June and July (in London, Cambridge and Manchester).

During the year, four of the Charitable Group's independent schools (Guildford High School, Banstead Preparatory School, Rowan Preparatory School, and Lincoln Minster School) were inspected by ISI. Each school met the standards. Inspectors found 'areas of significant strength' at three schools: Guildford High School, Banstead Preparatory School and Rowan Preparatory school.

Each year we survey pupils and parents regarding their experience of our schools. In surveys carried out in November 2024:

- 98% of prep pupils and 91% of secondary pupils agreed they were proud of their school (November 2023: 98% and 89%)
- 93% of prep pupils and 90% of secondary pupils agreed that they belong in their school (November 2023: 94% and 89%)
- 86% of prep parents and 77% of secondary parents said they would recommend their child's school to family and friends (November 2023: 88% and 79%).

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

## **Strategic report (continued)**

### **Great places to work**

Our schools aim to bring out the best in every colleague, through excellent professional development, a high-quality working environment and resources and strong relationships with students and other colleagues, so that every child and young person has a wonderful experience of school, and every adult has a meaningful role and the opportunity to develop their career.

Recruitment to our initial teacher training has been extremely strong, despite wider recruitment challenges across the sector. During 2024-25 353 people trained to become teachers with United Teaching and were recommended for Qualified Teaching Status. We have achieved our highest ever enrolment for 2025-26, with 420 trainee teachers starting in September 2025.

Teacher retention across our independent schools improved over the year, but worsened for support staff, and turnover overall remains higher than we saw before the Covid-19 pandemic. Voluntary turnover for teachers was 9.7% in August 2025 on a 12-month rolling basis (August 2024: 12.1%) and 14.2% for support staff at the same point (2024: 13.7%).

We continue to deliver high quality professional development programmes to colleagues within and beyond United Learning: internal leadership development programmes; national professional qualifications; networks for women and minority ethnic colleagues to support progression into leadership and an apprenticeship programme (delivering apprenticeships at level 3 for Teaching Assistant, Early Years Educator and HR Support together with a teacher apprenticeship delivered through United Teaching). The offer has grown further this year, with Level 3 IT and Level 4 Schools Sports Coach added to the suite of apprenticeships.

We are committed to ensuring that every member of staff is encouraged to aspire, learn, succeed and progress in their career and is rewarded for doing so.

Each year we survey staff regarding their experience of working in our schools. Key responses included:

- 89% of staff said they were proud to work at their school (November 2023: 90%)
- 71% of staff said they felt their development was supported by their school (November 2023: 71%)
- 78% of staff said their school gets the best out of them (November 2023: 75%)
- 74% of staff said they would recommend their school as an employer to a friend or family member (November 2023: 74%)
- 66% of staff said they were satisfied with the balance between their work and home life (November 2023: 67%)
- 76% of staff said their school was well led (November 2023: 81%)

### **Great group to join**

We aim to offer high-quality support to our schools across school improvement, the 'back office' and in relation to compliance.

During the year we welcomed Chafyn Grove, a day and boarding school for boys and girls aged between 3 and 11 based in Salisbury, into the Group.

Financial results are reported separately.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

## **Strategic report (continued)**

### **Great contribution beyond the group**

We aim to make a great contribution beyond United Learning, to have a positive impact on our local communities beyond our schools, on the national education system and on the wider world through our commitment to sustainable operations. Our independent schools offer children and young people the opportunity to engage in volunteering and acts of service within school and beyond, supporting their development as citizens with an ethical compass, a strong sense of responsibilities to others and conscious of the impact they can have on their community, society and the planet.

We continue to make a meaningful contribution beyond our schools, supporting local communities through our place-based work and our commitment to inclusive, sustainable development.

Over the course of the year, the Board made the decision to establish United Communities as a registered charity, marking a significant milestone in our journey to broaden and deepen this work. The charity is a subsidiary of the Charitable Company, and operations commenced in September 2025. The work of United Communities is underpinned by asset-based community development, which builds on the strengths, skills and leadership within communities.

United Communities now supports the development of 22 community hubs, with 13 considered established, including 2 youth and community centres on school sites, and 9 in their second year of development. These hubs reflect local contexts and are led by residents, schools and partners working together to create inclusive spaces for connection, support and opportunity.

In 2024-25, hubs collectively facilitated:

- 1,540 community activities
- 54,600 attendances, with residents engaging in youth clubs, toddler groups, community meals, sports and fitness activities, and more.
- 4,600 hours of local activity, powered by 1,800 volunteer hours

Overall hub attendances more than doubled compared to 2023-24, reflecting growing momentum and impact. Youth and children's activities were the most common activity type in 2024-25, reflecting a strong focus on increasing opportunities for social development and out-of-school enrichment. Resident-led activity has started to emerge across the most established hubs, signalling a shift towards communities mobilising their own strengths to lead local change.

As part of our commitment to the wider education system and with the aim of making a contribution towards the improvement of education generally across the country, we make available our expertise and resources to schools beyond United Learning, for example:

- We continued to make available our United Learning Curriculum to schools outside the group. As well as access to benchmarking analysis for end-of-year assessments. We have kept fees to a minimum, with revenue invested back into curriculum and assessment development to benefit every school using it.
- We also continued to open up our high-quality leadership development and apprenticeship programmes to colleagues from schools outside the group. In 2024-25 around 700 external participants were enrolled on one of our programmes.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**Strategic report (continued)**

We are committed to ensuring our operations are sustainable and seek to minimise our impact on the environment and climate. We aim to engage all members of our schools' communities in developing a sustainable approach to their work and activities, through the environmentally prudent management of buildings and operations, collaboration with suppliers to reduce indirect environmental impacts, and environmental programmes and education for its employees and pupils.

Over the past year, we have made progress through investment in our estate and a range of initiatives and activities, for example:

- A focus on energy efficiency is delivering both cost savings and reduced carbon emissions.
- Working alongside our group caterers, we are supporting schools to reduce meat consumption, including through 'Meat-Free Days', and also focusing on reducing the use of disposables in our canteens.
- Our schools continue to embed sustainability through the curriculum and more widely. Sustainability is now fully embedded in the United Learning Curriculum at primary. Children and young people are also engaged in taking action, through projects such as our Student Leadership programmes, a COP simulation event and the establishment of the first United Learning Eco Council.

At a national level, our central team played a key role in developing the DfE funded Sustainability Support for Education website, launched in September 2024. By July 2025, the site had already reached over 3,000 registered users, providing practical guidance for schools across the country to start and develop climate action.

**Public benefit**

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit when reviewing the Charitable Company's aims and objectives and in planning future activities for the year.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

## **Strategic report (continued)**

### **Going concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, including full consideration of the impact of the current economic and political climate, the Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, being at least twelve months from the date of approval of these financial statements.

The Charitable Company made an operating surplus in the year despite the introduction of VAT, the loss of business rates relief, the increase of National Insurance, and pay inflation impacting trading results, and so strong cash reserves were maintained. The current year also started positively with pupil numbers in line with budget. However, the full-year impact of the imposition of VAT, the loss of business rate relief and the increase of National Insurance will have a significant impact on the finances of the Charitable Company's schools. The Charitable Company is nevertheless in a strong position and able to absorb the surplus reduction in the short-term, with reviews continuing to identify efficiencies and savings to be made in order to restore surplus margins to allow for capital investment. Various cash flow scenarios have been modelled for the period to 28 February 2027. The worst-case scenario uses pessimistic assumptions including potential pupil number reductions resulting from high costs of living, and the model builds in higher levels of inflation and increased costs. However, even in this scenario the Charitable Company continues to have adequate cash reserves to meet its liabilities as they fall due during the forecast period. In preparing these forecasts, management have considered the different levers available to them, such as operating costs savings and the timing of capital expenditure, which can improve working capital at the lower points, notwithstanding that this remains positive throughout. The Charitable Company also has available to it a wide range of contingency measures which it could use to reduce costs and/or realise funds should that prove necessary.

There is no reliance on bank loan facilities in management's assessment of going concern. The headroom in the different cash flow models and the levers available to the Charitable Company have enabled management to conclude that there is no material uncertainty in management's going concern assessment.

Therefore, based on the current financial position and latest forecasts, the robustness of cash flow management and the level of financial reserves available in the cash flow scenarios, the Board of Trustees are confident that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue to operate 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 Accounting Policies.

### **Financial review**

The total surplus for the year amounted to £10.8m (2024: 18.3m). Included within these results was an actuarial loss on defined benefit pension schemes and other pension commitments of £(69)k (2024: £(127)k). During the year cash reduced as income deferred relating to the multi-year fee payment scheme continued to unwind as the relevant terms of education were provided.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**Strategic report (continued)**

The schools operated by the Charitable Company during the year were as follows:

AKS  
Ashford School  
Banstead Preparatory School  
Chafyn Grove  
Coworth Flexlands School  
Dunottar School  
Embley  
Godolphin  
Guildford High School  
Lincoln Minster School  
Rowan Preparatory School  
St. Ives (Haslemere)  
Surbiton High School  
The Royal School (closed 31 August 2025)  
Tranby

The Charitable Company is a sponsor of ULT which is a subsidiary undertaking of the Charitable Company. ULT's aim is to found and manage academies under the government initiative. Academies opened to date are listed on the United Learning website.

**Funds**

The value of restricted funds to be utilised in future years includes £1.2m (2024: £1.2m) for prize and scholarship funds and other donated funds and £1.7m (2024: £1.7m) for the sponsorship fund. Unrestricted funds amount to £55.8m (2024: £47.9m) including designated funds of £1.7m (2024: £2.0m) and endowment funds amount to £2.8m (2024: £Nil). The assets are held in pursuance of the Charitable Company's objectives.

**Plans for future periods**

The Charitable Company aims to continue to increase the number of pupils educated at its schools. This will be through organic growth and through mergers with other schools. The Charitable Company will continue to strive to improve the levels of performance of its students at all levels and will continue its efforts to ensure its prep students are well prepared for their secondary education and its secondary students are able to obtain jobs or a place in higher education, as they choose, once they leave its schools.

**Funding**

The Trustees are satisfied that the Charitable Company's assets attributable to each of its individual funds are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in relation to those funds.

**Principal risks and uncertainties**

During the year under review, the Trustees and senior management have formally identified, and documented, the major risks to which the Charitable Company is exposed.

Those risks have been reviewed by the Risk and Audit Committee, and risk management strategies have been implemented. Risk management is embedded in the day-to-day processes of the Charitable Company and its subsidiaries. The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Charitable Company is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the Charitable Company and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate our exposure to the major risks.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

### **Strategic report (continued)**

The principal risks include:

#### **Safeguarding**

To ensure that pupils are safe, feel safe, and are fully supported in this respect by their school, and to reduce the risk of child protection or safeguarding issues the Charitable Company has Safeguarding and Child Protection policies in place. These policies, which are available online, also provide a framework for its schools to develop secure processes for identifying and supporting pupils at risk of abuse. The implementation and effectiveness of these policies and procedures, which adhere to Department for Education guidelines on safeguarding and child protection, are regularly monitored and reviewed.

#### **Cyber Security**

In order to reduce the risk of data breaches and loss of access, the Charitable Company has Information Security policies in place, supported by regular training (including at induction and annual refreshers) and guidance for staff. Specific software, practices and processes are mandated across all the Charitable Company's schools to reduce opportunities for security breaches and mitigate the impact of any loss. The implementation and effectiveness of the approach are regularly monitored and reviewed, including through periodic stress testing.

#### **People**

The Charitable Company depends on the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers and support staff to achieve its objectives but currently operates in a challenging recruitment market. To mitigate the risk of not being able to recruit and retain high-quality staff the Charitable Company's pay agreements for all staff are competitive within the sector, United Teaching is increasingly delivering a supply of quality teachers, and the Group-wide recruitment and retention handbook includes policies and advice for schools, including in relation to promoting diversity and inclusion. The Charitable Company invests in the development of its staff, including through provision of bespoke leadership development programmes and apprenticeship programmes for support staff, delivered through its own training provider.

#### **Financial pressures**

The Charitable Company is reliant upon the parents paying its school fees promptly and an economic downturn could have a direct impact on parents' ability to pay their fees. The imposition of VAT from January 2025, loss of business rate relief and the increase of National Insurance from April 2025 have had a significant impact on the finances of the Charitable Company's schools and the sector as a whole.

The markets in which the Charitable Company's schools operate are therefore highly competitive. Consequently, the schools constantly review their processes to ensure that their pupils receive a first-class education that helps them to perform to their full ability in all aspects of school life.

A large proportion of the Charitable Company's costs relate to staff salaries, which are relatively fixed each year. There is a risk that a significant drop in revenue or further pay inflation or increases in pension contributions or National Insurance may lead to an inability to cover such costs.

To mitigate these financial risks senior management closely monitor all costs, including pay, against budgets and benchmarks on a monthly basis. Variance analysis is undertaken to consider the impact of varying income and costs when budgets are being prepared and through monthly management accounts and reforecasts, and action plans are prepared and implemented to address any adverse impacts.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**Strategic report (continued)**

**Fraud**

The Charitable Company is alert to the risk of fraud involving its employees or external parties. The Group's Anti-Fraud policy and response plan is reviewed annually and shared with all employees at the start of each year. School procedures are reviewed regularly as part of our programme of internal audit visits, with reports shared with the Board's Risk and Audit Committee.

**Data protection**

In order to ensure that its schools are compliant with all relevant data protection legislation to mitigate the risk of access or loss of personal data, the Charitable Company carries out regular training on key aspects of the data protection framework, including annual refresher training for all staff. The Group's Company Secretary is the Charitable Company's Data Protection Officer and works with school-based colleagues to ensure that policies and procedures are up to date and to share resources and effective practice.

**Business continuity**

The Charitable Company requires all its schools to have in place a business continuity plan; to manage the risk to operations in the event of a major incident; these are reviewed as part of the cycle of internal audit visits. A major incident escalation process is in place and communicated to schools. To further support the effectiveness of business continuity the Executive carried out training and a scenario exercise during the year and based on that have developed an overarching Business Continuity Policy and management system framework.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

## **Strategic report (continued)**

### **Financial risk management objectives and policies**

The Charitable Company uses various financial instruments including cash and various items such as trade debtors and trade creditors that arise directly from its operations. The main purpose of these financial instruments is to raise finance for the Charitable Company's operations.

The main risks arising from the Charitable Company's financial instruments are liquidity risk and interest rate risk.

Financial risk management is managed by the central office finance department who act as the Charitable Company's treasury function ensuring that surplus funds are deposited to maximise interest receivable. In addition, it uses the Charitable Company's facilities in the most efficient manner. Those facilities are designed to ensure that the Charitable Company has sufficient available funds for day-to-day operations and for planned expansion and capital expenditure. The Charitable Company seeks to manage financial risk by ensuring sufficient liquidity is available to meet foreseeable needs and to invest cash assets safely and profitably. Short term flexibility is achieved by overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company finances its operations through retained surpluses and overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company is exposed to price risk in terms of fees but is content that these are in line with those in the sector, and budgets accordingly. The principal credit risk for the Charitable Company arises from its debtors. Payment terms are enforced by the Charitable Company's credit control department and debt collection is outsourced as necessary. Credit risk is further managed through regular contact with any families in financial difficulty in an effort to assist.

Liquidity and cash flow risks are managed through the appropriate and carefully managed use of financial instruments with our principal bankers.

### **Policies**

As part of managing our risks and to ensure good governance we outline some key policies below.

### **Reserves**

The Charitable Company's reserve and funding policy is to maintain the level of available liquid funds required to support the strategic five-year goals of the Charitable Company and to cover any unforeseen circumstances including those covered by the Trust's risk management processes, whilst remaining within the debt levels agreed by Trustees and any banking covenants negotiated. When setting the appropriate level of reserves and funding Trustees are conscious that in-year funding relates to the pupils currently in schools and should be used in line with the Charitable Company's objectives, as well as to deal with unforeseen circumstances.

With this over-riding principle and also considering the size of the Charitable Company, its financial position, the economic landscape and the guidance of the Charities Commission, the Trustees consider that the appropriate level of available liquid funds to hold is equivalent to one month's expenditure on charitable operating activities. To achieve this a budget is agreed with each school which ensures adequate resources including for estates and digital infrastructure investment as per their individual five-year plans.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

### **Strategic report (continued)**

Total reserves as at 31 August 2025 are £61.5m (2024: £50.8m) made up of retained restricted and unrestricted funds, comprising unrestricted general funds of £54.8m (2024: £46.7m), unrestricted designated funds of £1.7m (2024: £2.0m), an unrestricted pension fund deficit of £0.7m (2024: deficit of £0.8m), endowment funds of £2.8m (2024: £Nil) and restricted funds of £2.9m (2024: £2.9m). Retained restricted and unrestricted reserves increased during the year due to well managed budgeting and financial controls ensuring the aims of the Charitable Company were met.

Available liquid funds as at 31 August 2025 totalled £50.9m (2024: £113.2m) of which £30.3m (2024: £63.1m) relates to fee invoices raised and settled for multiple years education, the balance excluding bank facilities adequately covers one month's expenditure on charitable operating activities of £14.1m (2024: £12.9m).

Trustees therefore consider the current level of reserves and future investment plans to be appropriate and in line with the Charitable Company's policies.

### **Investment policy**

The Charitable Company's cash reserves are used to set off against borrowings in other independent schools Group companies to minimise interest charges to the independent schools Group. Funds that are required within 5 years will be held in a mixture of fixed term deposit accounts, notice deposit accounts, money market and instant access current accounts. Cash balances are invested with Barclays Bank. In making any investment decisions, the Trustees expect investment managers to integrate environmental, social and governance aspects into their decision making. During the year the investment strategy produced returns in line with the Charitable Company's expectations and market rates.

### **Environmental policy**

The Charitable Group recognises that good environmental management must be an integral and fundamental part of its corporate business strategy and good educational practice. The Charitable Group therefore aims to ensure that its work is sustainable and seeks to avoid negative impact on the environment and climate. It is committed to reducing the carbon emissions associated with its operations, towards a goal of carbon neutral. Details of action this year are included in the strategic report.

### **Pay policy for key management personnel**

The Nominations and Remuneration Committee (details below) has responsibility for approving Executive salaries and remuneration. In considering Executive pay, the Committee takes account of the needs of the organisation for skills, experience and personal capabilities to enable it to achieve its objectives and the price of such skills in the labour market. The Committee considers that in order to attract and retain leaders with the skills to achieve organisational objectives, senior pay must be competitive in the marketplace, taking account of the pay rates of comparably senior and skilled employees in other organisations – particularly in comparable organisations in education, in public service and in the charitable sector, and taking account of the transferability of skills into other sectors.

The Committee considers annual pay in relation to the performance of the organisation, and of individuals against their objectives and in their broader contribution and in any changes to job role.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

## **Strategic report (continued)**

### **Employee involvement and employment of the disabled**

Employees have been consulted on issues of concern to them by means of regular consultative committee and staff meetings and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by management. Regular meetings are held with staff in our schools to brief them on major issues and discuss local issues. Each school also ensures that all staff are kept fully briefed through a variety of mechanisms, including staff meetings, notice boards, newsletters and the Group intranet United Hub.

All new staff joining the Charitable Company are fully inducted and annually the Charitable Company runs an induction programme, lasting two days, for all staff new to United Learning. The Charitable Company carries out exit interviews for all staff leaving the organisation and has adopted a procedure of upward feedback for senior management and the Trustees.

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

- Equal opportunities policy
- Volunteers' policy
- Health & safety policy

The Charitable Company has in place a National Recognition Agreement with the main teaching and support unions. Regular joint meetings of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) are held with this Group where matters of mutual interest are discussed and agreed upon.

The union members of the JNC report back to their members through locally appointed representatives. Each school also ensures all staff are kept fully briefed by using a variety of methods including staff meetings and newsletters.

In accordance with the Charitable Company's Equal Opportunities policy, the Charitable Company has long established fair employment practices in the recruitment, selection, retention and training of disabled staff.

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

Details of the Charitable Group's Gender Pay report can be found on its website at [unitedlearning.org.uk](http://unitedlearning.org.uk)

### **Fundraising**

Our schools occasionally fundraise for themselves or charities via events such as performances, non-school uniform days and school fairs.

Occasionally, the Group is approached by trusts or individuals who are interested in working with us and we will provide them with programme and funding information in order to explore funding opportunities that meet both parties' objectives and ethos. In prior years, the Charitable Group has received large donations from individuals in this way.

We are members of the Fundraising Regulator Fundraising Preference Service to monitor our fundraising complaints. We did not receive any complaints this year.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

## **Strategic report (continued)**

### **Academies**

The Charitable Company is the sponsor of, and works very closely with, ULT in managing a group of academies. Through interaction in all of the schools and academies, the two charitable companies work together to share best practice both ways, and to ensure they give pupils every opportunity to succeed during their education. This involves such activities as group meetings at every level to share best practice and the sharing of educational resources over United Hub.

### **Access policy**

The Charitable Company works very hard to offer education to as many pupils as possible throughout England. Through its bursary policy, it widens the number of pupils attending the Charitable Company's schools. By setting up, sponsoring, and working very closely with ULT, pupils in state funded academies enjoy the same educational resources available throughout the Charitable Company's schools. The Charitable Company's schools all access United Hub, which enables teachers at any of the schools in the Group to collaborate, share resources and challenges, positively impacting on workload.

### **Bursary Policy**

The ability to offer education to children of families who would not be able to afford the school fees is very important to the Charitable Company. As a result of the desire to help children in this way the Charitable Company continued to operate its schemes of means tested financial assistance and its separate schemes of scholarships and family discounts, where parents have more than one child at one of our schools. Means tested assistance is available to those who would not otherwise be able to afford the fees and, equally importantly, in cases of hardship where pupil's education or future prospects might be at risk. Bursaries range in value from 5% to 100% of the school fee. During the year, the Charitable Company granted £1.1m (2024: £0.8m) to pupils attending its schools under means tested assistance. This equated to 0.8% of gross fees received (2024: 0.5%). Further details of our Bursary Policy and how to apply are on our website.

In addition, during the year, the Charitable Company granted £271k (2024: £253k) of further discounts from the £4m Hardship Fund set up during lockdown to support those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

### **Section 172 Statement**

The Charitable Company's purpose is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools which enable all young people to make a success of their lives. The Board, senior leadership team and other employees take a values-based approach to strategic, financial and operational decision making in line with this purpose and with the requirements and expectations of Section 172. Strategic priorities – informed by our long-term vision and strategy, outcomes for pupils and other key performance measures – are discussed with the Board at the start of each year. The Board sets key performance indicators and targets relating to those priorities and monitors performance against these at each Group Board meeting. They also receive reports at each Board meeting highlighting any notable successes or concerns at school level. Sub-Committees, as described in the Governance Statement, meet to enable scrutiny of a wider range of data and reports and to review progress against the strategic objectives.

The Charitable Company has a strong focus on promoting collaboration between its schools and on enabling staff to connect with colleagues across the organisation. It operates a wide range of staff networks, from subject networks to function and specialist networks, which meet regularly (generally virtually) and support the sharing of knowledge and practice. We hold termly leadership forums bringing all Headteachers together and an annual Leadership Conference engaging Heads and Chairs.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**Strategic report (continued)**

**Section 172 Statement (continued)**

Each year a group-wide induction is provided to new staff – the Best in Everyone induction – prior to the start of term, which introduces new employees to the Group and the opportunities for their professional development.

Trustees take steps to understand the needs and priorities of our key stakeholder groups in a number of ways. Each year the Charitable Company carries out stakeholder surveys: in 2024 we surveyed staff, parents and pupils (key results are included in the strategic report). The results of these surveys are shared with the Board together with any action planned at a group level in response; all schools develop their own annual action plans.

Throughout the year Trustees take opportunities to visit schools, including discussion with staff and pupils. Notes of these visits are shared with the Executive Team and with the Board. The Board has designated a named Trustee to act as the key link between the Board, the education teams and the local governing bodies (LGBs). The Link Trustee also attends termly 'Chairs Forum' meetings with the chairs of LGBs. Guidance in relation to our LGBs makes clear the importance of having parent representation at a local level. More widely, the Charitable Company ensures that key information, policies and procedures are shared with its regulators (the Department for Education and the Information Commissioner's Office) as necessary.

The Trustees consider relationships with suppliers through their oversight of the Group procurement policy and Modern Slavery statement. The Group procurement strategy describes how the Charitable Group manages its suppliers based on criticality, how it deals with performance issues and how it works with suppliers to continually improve performance and identify new and better ways of delivering services.

**Governance**

The Board of Trustees have delegated their powers and functions to a committee of Trustees known as the Group Board. All the Trustees of United Church Schools Trust ("UCST") are members of the Group Board. Members of the Group Board also include persons who are Trustees of United Learning Trust ("ULT"), a subsidiary Charitable Company. The Group Board of Trustees has formally met 9 times during the year and the UCST Board of Trustees held 3 independent meetings. Attendance during the year at the meetings of the Trustees was as follows:

	<b>UCST meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson (Chair)	3	3
Mr Christian Brodie	3	3
Mr Ben Gordon	3	3
Dame Reena Keeble	3	3
Mr Paul Mustow	1	1
Mrs Melissa Geiger	3	3

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**Strategic report (continued)**

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Group Board meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Andrew Balfour	2	3
Mr Christian Brodie (Chair)	9	9
Mr David Brown	7	9
Sir Jon Coles	9	9
Ms Karima Fahmy	6	9
Mrs Melissa Geiger	9	9
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	6	9
Mr Ben Gordon	8	9
Dame Sue John (resigned 6 November 2025)	3	9
Dame Reena Keeble	9	9
Mr Neil MacDonald	8	9
Dr Rania Marandos	6	9
Mr Paul Mustow	3	6
Mr Christie Spurling	9	9

The Board of Trustees delegates clear responsibilities to the Schools' Local Governing Bodies ("LGBs"), whose purpose is to provide support and challenge to the school on behalf of the Board. The functions and duties of the LGBs are set out in the LGB Members' Handbook. The Group Board maintains links with the LGBs through the Head of Local Governance, and designated Trustees for the schools. The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the LGBs are invited to attend meetings of the Chairs' Forum, which meets three times in the academic year and provides advice on strategy and education, relevant continuing professional development and the opportunity for sharing of best practice with their peers. The Chairs' Forum meetings further enhance communications between LGBs and the Trustees.

The Nominations and Remuneration Committee (details below) regularly reviews the terms of office, skills and attributes of the Board of Trustees. On the basis of this, the Committee plans succession in order to ensure that the Board has available to it the range of skills and experience required to discharge its responsibilities. The Committee makes recommendations to the Board as to the need for new Trustees and leads the process of recruitment of Trustees as required, making recommendations of appointment to the Board. The Committee ensures that appointment is on merit, but also seeks to ensure that the Board reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

The Charitable Company has a policy for managing conflicts of interest which covers processes for the recording of business and pecuniary interest and the recording of gifts and hospitality, whether accepted or not. The business interests of the Trustees and LGB members are published on our website. The Trustee's register of interests is included in the papers for every meeting and the Trustees are asked to declare any further interests at the start of each meeting. Our procurement policy requires employees to check the register of business interests prior to making procurement decisions. Where there is a potential for any perceived or real conflict of interest the policy requires staff to declare it the earliest opportunity and remove themselves from any decision-making process.

The Board conducted a self-evaluation exercise in February 2025. This consisted of a questionnaire and a discussion at a Board meeting. The key themes discussed were whether the Board should do more in respect of stakeholder engagement, the timeliness of papers and whether we had the right balance of skills and expertise on the Board. The Board agreed to continue with their school visits and to use future recruitment to ensure the Board continues to have necessary skills and expertise. The last external review took place in the academic year 2023/24.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**Strategic report (continued)**

**Board Committees**

The Group Board has five further committees, which advise on matters defined by their terms of reference. The Committees are the Finance Committee, the Risk and Audit Committee, the Nominations and Remuneration Committee, the Education Standards and Performance Committee, and the Investment Committee. The minutes of all committees are made available to the Board of Trustees at meetings of the Group Board and the Chair of each Committee provides a brief report.

The Finance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Charitable Company properly plans the use of its finances and is adequately funded to undertake projected expenditure.
- review and recommend the annual budgets for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- monitor financial performance against agreed budgets.
- ensure, with the Risk and Audit Committee, that the Charitable Company's financial statements are supported accurately by management accounts.

Attendance at meetings during the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Christian Brodie	5	5
Mr David Brown	3	5
Mr Ben Gordon	5	5
Mr Neil MacDonald (Chair)	5	5

The Risk and Audit Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure implementation of a risk management framework for the Group.
- ensure an adequate internal control environment is established.
- ensure the Charities' annual financial statements are reconciled to the management accounts.
- ensure effective audit functions are in place (both external and internal).
- ensure adequate risk management processes are in place.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Andrew Balfour	3	4
Ms Karima Fahmy (Chair)	4	4
Mrs Melissa Geiger	4	4
Mr Yong Shen	3	4

The Nominations and Remuneration Committee's purpose is to:

- oversee the appointments of the Group Chair and Directors.
- approve Executive salaries and remuneration.
- consider matters relating to the organisation's HR and professional development strategies.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**Strategic report (continued)**

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Christian Brodie	4	4
Mr Ben Gordon (Chair)	4	4
Dame Sue John	2	4
Dr Rania Marandos	3	4

The Committee is advised by the Director of HR and the Company Secretary as appropriate.

The Group Education Standards and Performance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Trust discharges its responsibilities for education improvement in providing excellent education so that pupils are able to progress, achieve and to go on to succeed in life.
- advise the Group Board with respect to Group strategic educational priorities and key performance indicators.
- provide an overview, scrutiny and challenge of education performance of all schools.
- receive reports from the Executive regarding education standards and performance of schools, and to hold the Executive to account, against the approved Group strategic priorities and key performance indicators related to schools' educational performance.
- review annually the performance of local/cluster governing bodies to ensure they are operating at maximum effectiveness.
- receive reports from Executive regarding safeguarding, and to hold the Executive to account regarding the effectiveness of policies and process designed to keep children safe.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Christian Brodie	3	3
Sir Jon Coles	3	3
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	2	3
Dame Sue John	2	3
Dame Reena Keeble (Chair)	3	3
Mr Christie Spurling	3	3

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**Strategic report (continued)**

The Group Investment Committee was set up in this academic year and held its first meeting in March. Its purpose is to evaluate and recommend for approval to the Group Board the strategy for investment of the Group's funds in particular by:

- Review and recommend to the Group Board for approval the investment policy that determines the strategic allocation of funds, target returns, ethical considerations, performance targets and risk tolerance.
- To appoint and monitor the performance of Investment Managers responsible for the custody and management of the Group's long term investment funds.
- To monitor management of short-term investments.

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Christian Brodie	1	1
Mr Neil MacDonald (Chair)	1	1
Mr Yong Shen	1	1

**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 ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Charitable Company's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Charitable Company for the year from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 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 Charitable Company 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 Charitable Company's significant risks that has been in place for the year from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

The Charitable Group has a risk register that identifies the key strategic risks facing the Group, the actions taken to mitigate those risks and the owners of those actions. Risk control is exercised by the senior management team, which reviews the risk register on a monthly basis. The Risk and Audit Committee considers the risk register at each of their meetings. Its views are reported to the Board of Trustees via the Committee's minutes and the Chair's report to the Group Board.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

## **Strategic report (continued)**

### **The Risk and Control Framework**

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

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

The Group employs an Internal Auditor and a Head of Internal Audit who have a direct reporting line to the Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee. The Internal Audit service operates best practice professional standards and guidelines. Internal Audit independently and objectively reviews, on a continuous basis, the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Charitable Company's objectives, and contributes to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

Internal Audit's role includes giving advice on internal controls and performing a range of checks on the Charitable Company's core financial systems. An increased level of control checks were carried out in the year including increased testing of school level controls, covering local governance, procurement, income, cash management, human resources, payroll and fixed assets.

Furthermore, testing of non-financial systems and central office functions were conducted, including reviews of the organisation's whistleblowing arrangements, anti-fraud arrangements, recruitment of overseas staff, student route arrangements and a review of cyber security in relation to mobile phone and remote working.

On a quarterly basis, the Head of Internal Audit reports to the Board of Trustees through the Risk and Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities.

For the year ended 31 August 2025, based on the work undertaken, an internal audit opinion of good assurance was given on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

These arrangements can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period.

### **Chief Executive**

The Trustees delegate the day to day responsibility of the running of the Charitable Company to the Chief Executive Officer.

### **Connected charities**

There is a relationship between United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) and other charities as set out in note 26.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**Trustees' indemnities**

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Charitable Company has insurance in place to protect Trustees and Officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Charitable Company business.

**Statement of Trustees' (collectively known as the Board) responsibilities**

The Trustees (who are also directors of United Church Schools Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law), including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. 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 the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102).
- 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.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charitable Company will continue in operation.

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 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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**Disclosure of information to auditor**

The Trustees confirm that:

- so far as each Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charitable Company's auditor is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charitable Company's auditor is aware of that information.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson*

**Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson**  
Chair Trustee  
Date: 13/2/2026

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

---

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (the 'Charitable Company') for the year ended 31 August 2025, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards including Financial Reporting Standard 102; The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Charitable Company's affairs as at 31 August 2025 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 including FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, 2019 Edition; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

**Basis for opinion**

We have been appointed as auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with regulations made under that Act. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section' of our report. We are independent of the Charitable Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

**Conclusions relating to going concern**

We are responsible for concluding on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify the auditor's opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.

In our evaluation of the Trustees' conclusions, we considered the inherent risks associated with the Charitable Company's business model including effects arising from macro-economic uncertainties such as the cost of living crisis and introduction of VAT on private schools as well as other taxation changes, we assessed and challenged the reasonableness of estimates made by the Trustees and the related disclosures and analysed how those risks might affect the Charitable Company's financial resources or ability to continue operations over the going concern period.

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 Charitable Company'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 directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

**Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements. 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is 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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

**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 Strategic Report and the Trustees Report, prepared for the purposes of company law, included in the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- the Strategic Report and the Trustees Report included in the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matter on which we are required to report under the Companies Act 2006**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Charitable Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Strategic Report or the Directors' Report included in the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements.

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

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

**Responsibilities of Trustees**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' (collectively known as the Board) Responsibilities set out on page 25, the Trustees (who are also the Directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the Charitable Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Charitable Company, and the sector in which it operates. We determined that the following laws and regulations were most applicable: The Financial Report Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS102), Charities SORP, Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006;
- We understood how the Charitable Company is complying with these legal and regulatory frameworks by making inquiries of management and those charged with governance. We enquired of management and those charged with governance whether there were any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations, or whether they had any knowledge of actual or suspected fraud. We corroborated the results of our enquiries through our review of board minutes, through our legal and professional expenses review and through inquiries of solicitors who served during the period;
- We assessed the susceptibility of the Charitable Company's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur and the risk of material override of controls. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:
  - Identifying and assessing the design effectiveness of relevant controls management has in place to prevent and detect fraud
  - Challenging the assumptions and judgements made by management in applying its significant accounting policies
  - Identifying and testing journal entries, with a focus on manual postings, journal entries which directly impact the surplus reported in the Statement of Financial Activities and journal entries posted in the accounts preparation period
  - Identifying and testing related party transactions
  - Performing a review of Board and Committee Meeting minutes to identify any matters discussed which may bear upon our audit opinion

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

- These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error and detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it;
- Assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included consideration of the engagement team's:
  - Understanding of, and practical experience with, audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity
  - Knowledge and experience of the charity and education sectors
  - Understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to Charities, including the provisions of the applicable legislation and the guidance issued by the Charities Commission.
- The team communications in respect of potential non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations, including the potential for fraud in revenue through manipulation of income and management override of controls; and

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](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

**Use of our report**

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

*Jim McLarnon*

**Jim McLarnon ACA Senior**  
**Statutory Auditor**

for and on behalf of  
**Grant Thornton UK LLP**

Statutory Auditor  
Chartered Accountants

Birmingham Date: 13/2/2026

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

	Endowment funds	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Continuing operations	Discontinued operations	Total funds	<i>Continuing operations</i>	<i>Discontinued operations</i>	<i>Total funds</i>	
	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2024	2024	2024	
Note	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>										
Donations and legacies	4	2,807	23	7,402	10,138	94	10,232	13,953	128	14,081
Charitable activities	2,3	-	-	172,672	169,951	2,721	172,672	156,798	4,035	160,833
Investments	6	-	-	2,317	2,317	-	2,317	1,051	-	1,051
<b>Total income and endowments</b>		<b>2,807</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>182,391</b>	<b>182,406</b>	<b>2,815</b>	<b>185,221</b>	<b>171,802</b>	<b>4,163</b>	<b>175,965</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>										
Charitable activities	5	-	2	174,413	169,487	4,928	174,415	157,717	(43)	157,674
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>174,413</b>	<b>169,487</b>	<b>4,928</b>	<b>174,415</b>	<b>157,717</b>	<b>(43)</b>	<b>157,674</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

	Endowment funds 2025 £000	Restricted funds 2025 £000	Unrestricted funds 2025 £000	Continuing operations 2025 £000	Discontinued operations 2025 £000	Total funds 2025 £000	Continuing operations 2024 £000	Discontinued operations 2024 £000	Total funds 2024 £000
Note									
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before net gains/(losses) on investments</b>	<b>2,807</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7,978</b>	<b>12,919</b>	<b>(2,113)</b>	<b>10,806</b>	<b>14,085</b>	<b>4,206</b>	<b>18,291</b>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	-	12	4	9	7	16	27	(11)	16
<b>Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)</b>	<b>2,807</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>7,982</b>	<b>12,928</b>	<b>(2,106)</b>	<b>10,822</b>	<b>14,112</b>	<b>4,195</b>	<b>18,307</b>
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses):</b>									
Actuarial losses on defined benefit pension schemes	-	-	(69)	(69)	-	(69)	(127)	-	(127)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>2,807</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>7,913</b>	<b>12,859</b>	<b>(2,106)</b>	<b>10,753</b>	<b>13,985</b>	<b>4,195</b>	<b>18,180</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

	<b>Endowment funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Continuing operations</b>	<b>Discontinued operations</b>	<b>Total funds</b>	<i>Continuing operations</i>	<i>Discontinued operations</i>	<i>Total funds</i>
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2024</i>
<b>Note</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>	<i>£000</i>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>									
Total funds brought forward	-	2,881	47,906	50,787	-	50,787	32,607	-	32,607
Net movement in funds	2,807	33	7,913	12,859	(2,106)	10,753	13,985	4,195	18,180
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>2,807</b>	<b>2,914</b>	<b>55,819</b>	<b>63,646</b>	<b>(2,106)</b>	<b>61,540</b>	<i>46,592</i>	<i>4,195</i>	<i>50,787</i>

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

The notes on pages 38 to 69 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**  
**REGISTERED NUMBER: 02780748**

**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2025**

	Note	2025 £000	2024 £000
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	8	1,157	1,456
Tangible assets	9	27,096	20,377
Investments	10	652	691
		<b>28,905</b>	<b>22,524</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stocks	11	151	135
Debtors	12	83,531	60,124
Investments	13	5,000	-
Cash and cash equivalents		45,921	91,248
		<b>134,603</b>	<b>151,507</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(101,254)	(122,454)
		<b>33,349</b>	<b>29,053</b>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>62,254</b>	<b>51,577</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>62,254</b>	<b>51,577</b>
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>62,254</b>	<b>51,577</b>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	23	(714)	(790)
<b>Total net assets</b>		<b>61,540</b>	<b>50,787</b>
<b>Charity funds</b>			
Endowment funds	15	2,807	-
Restricted funds	15	2,914	2,881
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted funds excluding pension liability	15	56,533	48,696
Pension reserve	15	(714)	(790)
Total unrestricted funds	15	<b>55,819</b>	<b>47,906</b>
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>61,540</b>	<b>50,787</b>

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson*

Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson  
Date: 13/2/2026

The notes on pages 38 to 69 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

	Note	2025 £000	2024 £000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash provided by operating activities	17	(38,039)	73,955
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,781)	(2,823)
Net cash acquired in business combinations		546	642
Proceeds from the sale of fixed asset investments		55	-
Purchase of current asset investments		(5,000)	-
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(7,180)</b>	<b>(2,181)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Interest paid		(108)	(849)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		<b>(108)</b>	<b>(849)</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>(45,327)</b>	<b>70,925</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		91,248	20,323
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	18	<b>45,921</b>	<b>91,248</b>

The notes on pages 38 to 69 form part of these financial statements

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**1. Accounting policies**

**1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - 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) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

United Church Schools Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £'000.

**1.2 Consolidation**

Consolidated financial statements have not been prepared as consolidated financial statements for the Charitable Company's ultimate parent undertaking, United Learning Ltd, are publicly available from the Charitable Company's registered office and incorporate the results of the Charitable Company and its subsidiary undertakings. These financial statements therefore represent the results of United Church Schools Trust only.

**1.3 Income**

All income is recognised once the Charitable Company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donated services or facilities are recognised when the Charitable Company has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the Charitable Company of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the Charitable Company which is the amount the Charitable Company would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Bursaries and discounts awarded are charged in the year to which they relate, and are offset against the associated income.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.4 Expenditure**

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

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities. Charitable activities are costs incurred in the Charitable Company's educational operations. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the Charitable Company and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

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

Restructuring costs are recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to undertake restructuring activities, which includes redundancy payments.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Expenditure on charitable activities is incurred on directly undertaking the activities which further the Company's objectives, as well as any associated support costs.

**1.5 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Company for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment Funds consist of the freehold land and buildings of Chafyn Grove School which are held on endowment to support the school's purposes.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.6 Company status**

The Charitable Company is a company limited by guarantee. United Learning Ltd (Company number 00018582) is the ultimate parent undertaking and sole member of the Charitable Company. In the event of the Charitable Company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charitable Company.

**1.7 Going concern**

The Trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate, considering whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Charitable Company to continue as a going concern. The Trustees make this assessment in respect of a period at least one year from the signing date of these financial statements. The Trustees have considered the effects of the current economic and political climate in reaching their conclusions, preparing an annual budget and monitoring performance against it with forecasts for the balance of the financial year and beyond, and preparing a range of cash flow forecast scenarios. The Charitable Company maintains reserves to meet unexpected obligations and forecast models indicate that, even allowing for the rising costs of inflation including wage inflation, the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The financial statements have therefore been prepared on a going concern basis as discussed in the Trustees' Report on page 11.

Various cash flow scenarios have been modelled for the period to 28 February 2027. The worst-case scenario uses pessimistic assumptions including potential pupil number reductions resulting from the impact of the imposition of VAT and high costs of living, and the model builds in higher levels of inflation and increased costs such as pay. However, even in this scenario the Charitable Company continues to have adequate cash reserves to meet its liabilities as they fall due during the forecast period.

The headroom in the different cash flow models and the levers available to the Charitable Company have enabled management to conclude that there is no material uncertainty in management's going concern assessment.

**1.8 Intangible fixed assets and amortisation**

Intangible assets are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment. Amortisation begins when the intangible asset is available for use, and is charged straight line over the useful economic life of 8 - 10 years.

**1.9 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.9 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation (continued)**

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives.

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Freehold land	- not depreciated
Freehold buildings	- 50 years
Leasehold improvements	- Term of the lease
Motor vehicles	- 4 years
Fixtures and fittings	- 10 years
Computer equipment	- 3 years

Tangible assets donated to the Charitable Company are capitalised based on their fair values which then represents the deemed historic cost of the asset.

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.

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

**1.10 Investments**

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as 'Gains/(Losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Current asset investments consist of cash held in fixed-term deposits that mature within 12 months from the acquisition date. These investments are recorded at cost and can only be realised at the end of the deposit term.

**1.11 Stocks**

Stock is held at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell.

**1.12 Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charitable Company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

**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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.14 Taxation**

The Charitable Company is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Charitable Company is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

**1.15 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.

**1.16 Cash and cash equivalents**

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

**1.17 Liabilities and Provisions**

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 Charitable Company anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar charges.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.18 Financial instruments**

The Charitable Company only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors, loans from banks and other third parties, loans to related parties and investments in non-puttable ordinary shares.

Financial assets that are measured at cost and amortised cost are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

For financial assets measured at amortised cost, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. If a financial asset has a variable interest rate, the discount rate for measuring any impairment loss is the current effective interest rate determined under the contract.

For financial assets measured at cost less impairment, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and best estimate, which is an approximation of the amount that the Charitable Company would receive for the asset if it were to be sold at the balance sheet date.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset and the net amount reported in the Balance Sheet when there is an enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.19 Pensions**

The Charitable Company make contributions to a number of defined contribution pension plans for staff and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charitable Company to the fund in respect of the year.

Teachers have the choice of remaining in the Teachers Pension Scheme ("TPS"), a defined benefit scheme or joining the Aviva Pension Trust for Independent Schools ("APTIS") which is a defined contribution scheme. Retirement benefits to certain support staff are provided by the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS"), which is a defined benefit scheme.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the Charitable Company 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. As stated in note 23, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore 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 scheme and assets are held separately from those of the Charitable Company 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 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.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.20 Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty**

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

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

*Unfunded pension obligations*

The Charitable Company has also made provision for unfunded pension obligations amounting to £0.7m (2024: £0.8m). The key assumptions made in computing this provision comprise mortality assumptions and discount rates, with the total obligation arising as a result having been disclosed in note 23. Any changes in these assumptions would impact the carrying amount of the liability.

*Depreciation of tangible fixed assets*

Depreciation amounting to £2.6m (2024: £2.2m) is computed based on the best estimate of the useful economic lives of the relevant assets and their ultimate residual value.

*Provision for bad debts*

An allowance for doubtful debts amounting to £1.0m (2024: £1.0m) is maintained for estimated losses resulting from the inability of the Charitable Company's fee debtors to make required payments. The Charitable Company applies a policy for providing for bad debts which is periodically reviewed based on an assessment of actual outcomes against those expected.

**2. School fees receivable and catering income**

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Gross fee income receivable	<b>141,668</b>	<i>135,917</i>
Scholarships, bursaries and reduced fees	<b>(10,860)</b>	<i>(10,317)</i>
Catering income	<b>4,445</b>	<i>2,111</i>
<b>Net fee income receivable</b>	<b>135,253</b>	<i>127,711</i>

In 2025, of the total school fees receivable and catering income, £135,253k (2024: £127,711k) was to unrestricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**3. Other educational related income**

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Support services to other schools and academies	<b>21,212</b>	<i>18,990</i>
Early years funding	<b>2,569</b>	<i>1,478</i>
Pupil registration fees	<b>307</b>	<i>368</i>
Charges for additional classes	<b>2,160</b>	<i>1,805</i>
Charges for school trips	<b>5,676</b>	<i>5,629</i>
Other school income	<b>4,820</b>	<i>3,780</i>
Rents and lettings	<b>675</b>	<i>1,072</i>
	<b>37,419</b>	<i>33,122</i>
	<b>37,419</b>	<i>33,122</i>

In 2025, of the other educational related income, £37,419k (2024: £33,122k) was to unrestricted funds.

**4. Voluntary income**

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Other sponsorship and donations received	<b>3,118</b>	<i>3,837</i>
Gift aid from subsidiary undertakings	<b>1,492</b>	<i>1,144</i>
Net assets transferred from other charities	<b>5,622</b>	<i>9,100</i>
	<b>10,232</b>	<i>14,081</i>
	<b>10,232</b>	<i>14,081</i>

In 2025 of the total voluntary income, £7,402k (2024: £13,641k) was to unrestricted funds, £23k (2024: £440k) was to restricted funds and £2,807 (2024: £Nil) was to endowment funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**5. Analysis of total resources expended**

	Staff costs 2025 £000	Other costs 2025 £000	Depreciation 2025 £000	Total 2025 £000	Total 2024 £000
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
<b>Direct costs</b>					
Educational supplies	87,281	15,757	-	<b>103,038</b>	93,458
Staff development	507	104	-	<b>611</b>	468
Examination fees	-	1,043	-	<b>1,043</b>	905
Technology costs	3,879	3,110	-	<b>6,989</b>	6,549
	<u>91,667</u>	<u>20,014</u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>111,681</b></u>	<u>101,380</u>
<b>Support costs</b>					
Recruitment and support	-	579	-	<b>579</b>	594
Premises costs	5,455	15,883	-	<b>21,338</b>	17,839
Insurance	-	1,364	-	<b>1,364</b>	1,174
Catering	38	8,145	-	<b>8,183</b>	7,685
Marketing	1,325	1,535	-	<b>2,860</b>	3,096
Legal and professional	-	1,216	-	<b>1,216</b>	1,453
Other support costs	20,262	3,419	-	<b>23,681</b>	20,414
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	2,894	<b>2,894</b>	2,450
Loss on disposal of assets	-	-	-	-	4
Bank interest and charges	-	255	-	<b>255</b>	1,051
	<u>27,080</u>	<u>32,396</u>	<u><b>2,894</b></u>	<u><b>62,370</b></u>	<u>55,760</u>
<b>Governance costs</b>					
Auditor costs - audit fees	-	64	-	<b>64</b>	129
Company Secretariat costs	283	15	-	<b>298</b>	402
Trustees' meeting and travel	-	2	-	<b>2</b>	3
	<u>119,030</u>	<u>52,491</u>	<u>2,894</u>	<u><b>174,415</b></u>	<u>157,674</u>
<b>Total 2025</b>	<u><u>119,030</u></u>	<u><u>52,491</u></u>	<u><u>2,894</u></u>	<u><u><b>174,415</b></u></u>	<u><u>157,674</u></u>
<i>Total 2024</i>	<u><u>106,355</u></u>	<u><u>48,869</u></u>	<u><u>2,450</u></u>	<u><u>157,674</u></u>	

In 2025, of the total resources expended, £174,413k (2024: £157,671k) was to unrestricted funds and £2k (2024: £3k) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

Total resources expended include:

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Auditor's remuneration:		
Audit of the charitable company's annual financial statements	74	71
Non-audit services	10	10
Depreciation:		
Tangible fixed assets, owned	2,595	2,150
Amortisation: Intangible fixed assets	299	300
Operating lease rentals	1,344	1,280
	<b>1,344</b>	<b>1,280</b>

**6. Net interest**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Bank interest receivable	2,317	1,051
Interest payable to Group undertakings	(108)	(847)
Bank interest payable	-	(2)
	<b>2,209</b>	<b>202</b>

**7. Staff costs**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Wages and salaries	92,307	83,851
Social security costs	10,438	8,674
Other pension costs (note 23)	15,949	13,472
Agency fees	336	358
	<b>119,030</b>	<b>106,355</b>

During the year, there were redundancy or termination payments made which amounted to £1,122k (2024: £276k).

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

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>No.</b>	<b>No.</b>
	<b>2,581</b>	<b>2,455</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**7. Staff costs (continued)**

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

	<b>2025</b>	2024
	<b>No.</b>	No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	<b>161</b>	133
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	<b>60</b>	49
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	<b>35</b>	32
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	<b>16</b>	8
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	<b>6</b>	7
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	<b>6</b>	6
In the band £120,001 - £130,000	<b>3</b>	6
In the band £130,001 - £140,000	<b>6</b>	4
In the band £140,001 - £150,000	<b>4</b>	3
In the band £150,001 - £160,000	<b>2</b>	2
In the band £160,001 - £170,000	<b>3</b>	1
In the band £170,001 - £180,000	<b>1</b>	2
In the band £180,001 - £190,000	<b>2</b>	1
In the band £190,001 - £200,000	<b>1</b>	2
In the band £200,001 - £210,000	<b>1</b>	1
In the band £210,001 - £220,000	-	1
In the band £220,001 - £230,000	<b>1</b>	-
In the band £290,001 - £300,000	-	1
In the band £310,001 - £320,000	<b>1</b>	-

Key management personnel, as listed on page 1, are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity. The remuneration for these individuals totalled £2,211k (2024: £2,076k).

During the year, the following amounts were paid in respect of higher paid employees as shown above:

	<b>2025</b>	2024
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Pension contributions to defined contribution, teachers' pension scheme and local government pension schemes	<b>5,173</b>	4,242

During the year, 115 higher paid employees (2024: 56) participated in defined contribution schemes, 193 (2024: 191) participated in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (operated by the Teachers' Pension Agency), 1 (2024: 1) participated in the Local Government Pension Scheme and Nil (2024: 11) did not participate in Charitable Company pension schemes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**Payment to Trustees**

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2024: £Nil).

No Trustee, or person with a family or business connection with a Trustee, received remuneration in the year, directly or indirectly, from either the Charitable Company or a company controlled by the Charitable Company.

Expense reimbursements paid to 3 (2024: 4) Trustees during the year amounted to £2k (2024: £3k) and all related to travel and subsistence costs.

**8. Intangible assets**

	<b>Software development £000</b>
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 September 2024	2,995
At 31 August 2025	2,995
<b>Amortisation</b>	
At 1 September 2024	1,539
Charge for the year	299
At 31 August 2025	1,838
<b>Net book value</b>	
At 31 August 2025	1,157
At 31 August 2024	1,456

All intangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**9. Tangible fixed assets**

	Freehold property £000	Long-term leasehold property £000	Motor vehicles £000	Fixtures and fittings £000	Computer equipment £000	Total £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>						
At 1 September 2024	10,652	2,204	745	18,122	4,017	35,740
Additions	179	18	89	1,518	977	2,781
Transfers from other trusts	6,394	-	9	109	21	6,533
Disposals	-	(465)	(67)	(1,302)	(199)	(2,033)
At 31 August 2025	<u>17,225</u>	<u>1,757</u>	<u>776</u>	<u>18,447</u>	<u>4,816</u>	<u>43,021</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>						
At 1 September 2024	206	944	625	10,202	3,386	15,363
Charge for the year	340	33	79	1,436	707	2,595
On disposals	-	(465)	(67)	(1,302)	(199)	(2,033)
At 31 August 2025	<u>546</u>	<u>512</u>	<u>637</u>	<u>10,336</u>	<u>3,894</u>	<u>15,925</u>
<b>Net book value</b>						
At 31 August 2025	<u><u>16,679</u></u>	<u><u>1,245</u></u>	<u><u>139</u></u>	<u><u>8,111</u></u>	<u><u>922</u></u>	<u><u>27,096</u></u>
At 31 August 2024	<u><u>10,446</u></u>	<u><u>1,260</u></u>	<u><u>120</u></u>	<u><u>7,920</u></u>	<u><u>631</u></u>	<u><u>20,377</u></u>

All tangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**10. Fixed asset investments**

		Listed investments £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>		
At 1 September 2024		691
Disposals		(55)
Revaluations		16
At 31 August 2025		652
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Investments at value comprise:</b>		
Listed investments	640	641
Money market deposits	12	50
	<b>652</b>	<b>691</b>
	<b>652</b>	<b>691</b>

All the fixed asset investments are held in the UK.

**Subsidiary undertakings**

At 31 August 2025, the Charitable Company held more than 20% of the following:

	Holding	Nature of the business	Class of share capital held
	%		
United Learning Trust	100	Education	-
Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited	100	Dormant	-
United Communities	100	Community hub development	-

The registered office address of each subsidiary undertaking is Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, England, PE3 6SB, and all are limited by guarantee.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**11. Stocks**

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Catering stock	<b>151</b>	<i>135</i>

**12. Debtors**

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Trade debtors	<b>36,315</b>	<i>30,885</i>
Amounts owed by Group undertakings	<b>41,106</b>	<i>22,460</i>
Other debtors	<b>726</b>	<i>2,794</i>
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>5,384</b>	<i>3,985</i>
	<b>83,531</b>	<i>60,124</i>

**13. Current asset investments**

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Cash on deposit	<b>5,000</b>	<i>-</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**14. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Trade creditors	<b>4,254</b>	<i>4,263</i>
Amounts owed to Group undertakings	<b>6</b>	<i>6</i>
Other taxation and social security	<b>9,025</b>	<i>2,272</i>
Other creditors	<b>11,538</b>	<i>12,716</i>
Accruals and deferred income	<b>76,431</b>	<i>103,197</i>
	<b>101,254</b>	<i>122,454</i>

Amounts owed to Group undertakings are unsecured, interest free and repayable on demand.

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Deferred income at 1 September 2024	<b>99,991</b>	<i>41,405</i>
Resources deferred during the year	<b>72,498</b>	<i>99,991</i>
Amounts released from previous periods	<b>(99,991)</b>	<i>(41,405)</i>
<b>Deferred income as at 31 August 2025</b>	<b>72,498</b>	<i>99,991</i>

Deferred income relates to invoices raised for multiple terms education.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**15. Statement of funds**

**Statement of funds - current year**

	Balance at 1 September 2024 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Gains/ (losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2025 £000
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Designated Funds	1,971	(266)	(52)	-	1,653
<b>General funds</b>					
General Funds - all funds	46,725	182,657	(174,506)	4	54,880
Pension reserve	(790)	-	145	(69)	(714)
	<u>45,935</u>	<u>182,657</u>	<u>(174,361)</u>	<u>(65)</u>	<u>54,166</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>47,906</u>	<u>182,391</u>	<u>(174,413)</u>	<u>(65)</u>	<u>55,819</u>
<b>Endowment funds</b>					
Endowment Funds - all funds	-	2,807	-	-	2,807
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	1,152	23	(2)	12	1,185
	<u>2,881</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>(2)</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>2,914</u>
<b>Total of funds</b>	<u><u>50,787</u></u>	<u><u>185,221</u></u>	<u><u>(174,415)</u></u>	<u><u>(53)</u></u>	<u><u>61,540</u></u>

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**15. Statement of funds (continued)**

Designated funds are accumulated surpluses from prior years available for use by the School that generated the funds. In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the Charitable Company transferred £4 million of general funds to designated funds during 2020 to be used in support of those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic. The fund continues to be used to support families who face financial hardship.

Endowment Funds consist of the freehold land and buildings of Chafyn Grove School which are held on endowment to support the school's purposes

The Sponsorship fund has been formed to gather together the external donations received towards the Charitable Company's support for the academies of United Learning Trust.

Other donated funds include a number of individual donations towards specific building and other projects within the Group.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**15. Statement of funds (continued)**

**Statement of funds - prior year**

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2023 £000</i>	<i>Income £000</i>	<i>Expenditure £000</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £000</i>	<i>Gains/ (losses) £000</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2024 £000</i>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
<b>Designated funds</b>						
Designated Funds - all funds	2,374	(253)	(153)	3	-	1,971
<b>General funds</b>						
General Funds - all funds	28,606	175,778	(157,664)	-	5	46,725
Pension reserve	(809)	-	146	-	(127)	(790)
	<u>27,797</u>	<u>175,778</u>	<u>(157,518)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(122)</u>	<u>45,935</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>30,171</u>	<u>175,525</u>	<u>(157,671)</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>(122)</u>	<u>47,906</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>						
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	707	440	(3)	(3)	11	1,152
	<u>2,436</u>	<u>440</u>	<u>(3)</u>	<u>(3)</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>2,881</u>
<b>Total of funds</b>	<u><u>32,607</u></u>	<u><u>175,965</u></u>	<u><u>(157,674)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>(111)</u></u>	<u><u>50,787</u></u>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**16. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current year**

	<b>Endowment funds 2025 £000</b>	<b>Restricted funds 2025 £000</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds 2025 £000</b>	<b>Total funds 2025 £000</b>
Tangible fixed assets	2,807	-	24,289	<b>27,096</b>
Intangible fixed assets	-	-	1,157	<b>1,157</b>
Fixed asset investments	-	440	212	<b>652</b>
Current assets	-	2,474	132,129	<b>134,603</b>
Creditors due within one year	-	-	(101,254)	<b>(101,254)</b>
Pension scheme liability	-	-	(714)	<b>(714)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,807</b>	<b>2,914</b>	<b>55,819</b>	<b>61,540</b>

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year**

	<i>Restricted funds 2024 £000</i>	<i>Unrestricted funds 2024 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2024 £000</i>
Tangible fixed assets	-	20,377	20,377
Intangible fixed assets	-	1,456	1,456
Fixed asset investments	440	251	691
Current assets	2,441	149,066	151,507
Creditors due within one year	-	(122,454)	(122,454)
Pension scheme liability	-	(790)	(790)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,881</b>	<b>47,906</b>	<b>50,787</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**17. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities**

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	<b>10,822</b>	<i>18,307</i>
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation and amortisation charges	<b>2,895</b>	<i>2,450</i>
Interest paid	<b>108</b>	<i>849</i>
(Increase) in stocks	<b>(12)</b>	<i>(131)</i>
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	<b>(23,209)</b>	<i>6,235</i>
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	<b>(22,854)</b>	<i>55,502</i>
Revaluation of fixed asset investments	<b>(16)</b>	<i>(16)</i>
Profit on disposal of fixed assets	<b>-</b>	<i>4</i>
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	<b>(144)</b>	<i>(145)</i>
Funds transferred from other charities	<b>(5,622)</b>	<i>(9,100)</i>
<b>Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities</b>	<b>(38,032)</b>	<i>73,955</i>

**18. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents**

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Cash in hand and on deposit	<b>45,921</b>	<i>91,248</i>

**19. Analysis of changes in net debt**

	<b>At 1</b>		<b>At 31</b>
	<b>September</b>	<b>Cash flows</b>	<b>August 2025</b>
	<b>2024</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
	<b>£000</b>		<b>£000</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	<b>91,248</b>	<b>(45,327)</b>	<b>45,921</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**20. Contingent liabilities**

At 31 August 2025, the Charitable Company was party to cross-guarantees on overdrafts totalling £Nil (2024: £10,000k).

**21. Capital commitments**

There were no capital commitments at 31 August 2025 or 31 August 2024.

**22. Acquired operations**

On 1 May 2025, United Church Schools Trust acquired the trade and certain assets and liabilities of the former Chafyn Grove School for £Nil consideration. The fair values at the acquisition date of each class of assets and liabilities were as follows:

	<b>Book value</b> <b>£000</b>	<i>Fair value</i> <i>£000</i>
Tangible fixed assets	<b>4,210</b>	6,533
Stock	<b>4</b>	4
Debtors	<b>198</b>	198
Cash	<b>546</b>	546
	<b>748</b>	748
Creditors due within one year	<b>(1,566)</b>	(1,566)
Creditors due in more than one year	<b>(93)</b>	(93)
	<b>(1,659)</b>	(1,659)
<b>Total identifiable net assets</b>	<b>3,295</b>	5,622

The net assets acquired were held across unrestricted funds (£2,792k), restricted funds (£23k) and endowment funds (£2,807k).

The impact of acquired operations on the Statement of Financial Activities since acquisition is as follows:

	<b>Total</b> <b>£000</b>
Income from donations and legacies	27
Income from charitable activities	837
Expenditure on charitable activities	<u>(1,226)</u>
	<u><b>(362)</b></u>

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**23. Pension commitments**

The Charitable Company operates defined contribution schemes for the benefit of its employees. The assets of the schemes are managed and held externally on behalf of the scheme members in funds independent from those of the Charitable Company. Employer contributions payable to the schemes during the year amounted to £2.9m (2024: £1.8m). Employee and employer contributions payable to the schemes at the Balance Sheet date amounted to £0.4m (2024: £0.2m) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company operates two defined benefit pension scheme: the Teachers' Pension Scheme for England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff, and the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff of one school, which is managed by the Local Authority.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2022. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 27 October 2023.

Contributions amounting to £1.4m were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2025 (2024: £1.5m) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company also has an unfunded defined benefit pension scheme which is provided for in the financial statements.

Provisions for unfunded pensions included within the total defined benefit pension scheme liability amounted to £0.7m (2024: £0.8m). The current service cost amounted to £Nil (2024: £Nil) and actuarial losses recognised through other comprehensive income amounted to £0.1m (2024: £0.1m). Benefits paid during the year amounted to £0.1m (2024: £0.1m).

The current mortality assumptions in respect of unfunded pensions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on the retirement age of 65 are between 19-21 years. The discount rate applied in calculating the obligation is 6.10%, with future pension increase and inflation being 2.70%.

**Teachers' Pension Scheme**

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. Membership is automatic for teachers. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment and participate in the Aviva Pension Trust for Independent Schools (APTIS).

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

**Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme**

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2022. 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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

- Employer contribution rates set at 28.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administration levy).
- total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service to the effective date of £262,000 million and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222,200 million, giving a notional past service deficit of £39,800 million.

The result of this valuation has been 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 £12.5m (2024: £11.6m).

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

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

**Local Government Pension Scheme**

The Charitable Company is one of several employing bodies included within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee administered funds. Contributions to the scheme are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of triennial valuations using the projected unit method.

The total employer's contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2025 was £44k (2024: £49k). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 21.4 - 22.0 per cent for employers and 5.5 - 12.5 per cent for employees.

**Ruling on amendment of Contracted out Salary Related pension schemes**

The Trustees are aware of the 'Virgin Media Ltd v NTL Pension Trustees II Ltd (and others)' case. There is a potential for the outcome of the case to have an impact on defined benefit pension schemes such as the LGPS. The case affects defined benefit schemes that provided contracted-out benefits before 6 April 2016 based on meeting the reference scheme test. Where scheme rules were amended, potentially impacting benefits accrued from 6 April 1997 to 5 April 2016, schemes needed the actuary to confirm that the reference scheme test was still being met by providing written confirmation under Section 37 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993. In the Virgin Media case the judge ruled that alterations to the scheme rules were void and ineffective because of the absence of written actuarial confirmation required under Section 37 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993. The case was taken to The Court of Appeal in June 2024 and the original ruling was upheld.

As a result, there may have been a further liability to the pension schemes for benefits that were reduced by previous amendments, if those amendments proved invalid (i.e. were made without obtaining s37 confirmation).

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

On 5 June 2025 the government released a statement confirming that it recognised schemes and sponsoring employers needed clarity around scheme liabilities and member benefit levels in order to plan for the future, and said it would therefore introduce legislation to give affected pension schemes the ability to retrospectively obtain written actuarial confirmation that historic benefit changes met the necessary standards.

On 1 September 2025 the government published a series of draft amendments to the Pension Schemes Bill 2025 including new provisions which will enable trustees to obtain retrospective validation of previous amendments where certain conditions are met.

The Trustees will investigate the possible implications with their advisers, but it is not possible at present to estimate the potential impact, if any, on the schemes and consequently on the defined benefit obligation in the financial statements.

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Balance sheet date (expressed as weighted averages):

	<b>At 31 August 2025</b>	<i>At 31 August 2024</i>
	%	%
Discount rate	<b>6.10</b>	4.90
Future salary increases	<b>4.10</b>	4.10
Future pension increases	<b>2.70</b>	2.70
Inflation assumption	<b>2.60</b>	2.60
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
	<b>At 31 August 2025</b>	<i>At 31 August 2024</i>
Mortality rates (in years)		
- for a male aged 65 now	<b>20.9</b>	21.0
- at 65 for a male aged 45 now	<b>22.0</b>	22.2
- for a female aged 65 now	<b>23.5</b>	23.5
- at 65 for a female aged 45 now	<b>25.0</b>	25.3
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

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

	<b>At 31 August 2025</b>	<i>At 31 August 2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Equities	<b>4,323</b>	4,397
Other bonds	<b>10</b>	9
Government bonds	<b>19</b>	9
Property	<b>795</b>	784
Cash	<b>288</b>	129
Other	<b>4,151</b>	3,890
<b>Total market value of LGPS assets</b>	<b>9,586</b>	<b>9,218</b>

The actual return on scheme assets was £593k (2024: £644k).

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities are as follows (for both the LGPS and unfunded pension scheme):

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Current service cost	<b>(37)</b>	(37)
Interest cost	<b>(296)</b>	(309)
Interest income	<b>446</b>	467
Interest on the effect of the asset ceiling	<b>(149)</b>	(157)
Administrative expenses	<b>(1)</b>	(2)
<b>Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities</b>	<b>(37)</b>	<b>(38)</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

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

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening defined benefit obligation	<b>6,952</b>	<i>6,608</i>
Current service cost	<b>37</b>	<i>37</i>
Interest cost	<b>296</b>	<i>309</i>
Contributions by scheme participants	<b>13</b>	<i>13</i>
Benefits paid - LGPS	<b>(281)</b>	<i>(190)</i>
Benefits paid - unfunded obligation	<b>(138)</b>	<i>(135)</i>
Actuarial losses/(gains)	<b>(828)</b>	<i>310</i>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>6,051</b>	<i>6,952</i>
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Movements in the fair value of the Company's share of scheme assets were as follows:

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening fair value of scheme assets	<b>9,218</b>	<i>8,704</i>
Interest on assets	<b>446</b>	<i>467</i>
Actual return less interest	<b>147</b>	<i>177</i>
Contributions by employer	<b>44</b>	<i>49</i>
Contributions by scheme participants	<b>13</b>	<i>13</i>
Benefits paid	<b>(281)</b>	<i>(190)</i>
Administration expenses	<b>(1)</b>	<i>(2)</i>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Closing fair value of scheme assets</b>	<b>9,586</b>	<i>9,218</i>
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

The Charitable Company expects to contribute £44k to the LGPS in 2025.

Amounts for the current and previous period are as follows:

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Defined benefit pension schemes</b>		
Defined benefit obligations (including unfunded pension deficit)	<b>(6,051)</b>	<i>(6,952)</i>
LGPS assets	<b>9,586</b>	<i>9,218</i>
Unrecognised asset	<b>(4,249)</b>	<i>(3,056)</i>
<b>Net deficit</b>	<b>(714)</b>	<i>(790)</i>
Experience adjustments on LGPS and unfunded liabilities	<b>828</b>	<i>(310)</i>
Experience adjustments on LGPS assets	<b>147</b>	<i>177</i>
	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Unfunded pension scheme liability	<b>(714)</b>	<i>(790)</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(714)</b>	<i>(790)</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**24. Operating lease commitments**

At 31 August 2025 the Company had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Land and buildings</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>330</b>	<i>327</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>1,017</b>	<i>827</i>
After more than 5 years	<b>2,534</b>	<i>1,238</i>
	<b>3,881</b>	<i>2,392</i>
	<b>3,881</b>	<i>2,392</i>
	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Other</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>1,699</b>	<i>1,344</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>2,791</b>	<i>1,428</i>
After more than 5 years	<b>77</b>	<i>87</i>
	<b>4,567</b>	<i>2,859</i>
	<b>4,567</b>	<i>2,859</i>

**25. Directors' indemnities**

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Charitable Company has purchased insurance to protect Directors and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on school business. The insurance provides cover up to £5,000,000 on any one claim and the cost for the year ended 31 August 2025 was £Nil (2024: £Nil). The cost of this insurance is included in the total insurance cost.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

---

**26. Related party transactions**

United Learning Ltd is the sole member of United Church School Trust (UCST).

During the year, United Learning Ltd charged interest totalling £108k (2024: £847k) and rent totalling £4.1m (2024: £3.1m) to the Charitable Company.

UCST is the sole member of United Learning Trust (ULT).

The Charitable Company provided central services to ULT. The total amount charged during the year totalled £17.9m (2024: £16.2m) and was computed so as to equal the actual costs incurred on a per pupil basis.

At the year end date, balances amounting to £41.1m (2024: £22.5m) were due to the Charitable Company, and balances amounting to £6k (2024: £6k) were due from the Charitable Company to other entities in the Charitable Group of which United Learning Ltd is the ultimate parent. These balances arise as a result of direct recharges of costs where resources are centrally procured, with the underlying transactions not therefore representing related party transactions.

Brake Bros Ltd - a company in which a Trustee of both United Learning Ltd and ULT is Chief Financial Officer. The Charitable Company purchased products from Brake Bros Ltd totalling £15,659 during the period for cash consideration. £477 was due to Brake Bros Ltd at 31 August 2025. The Charitable Company made the purchases at arm's length in accordance with its financial regulations, which the Trustee neither participated in, nor influenced.

There have been no other transactions with related parties that require disclosure under either FRS 102 or Charities SORP (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

**27. Ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party**

The Board considers that the ultimate and immediate parent undertaking of the Charitable Company is United Learning Ltd (Company number: 00018582) by virtue of the fact that it is the sole member and therefore has the ability to appoint or remove trustees. The principal objects of United Learning Ltd are the same as those of the Charitable Company.

In the opinion of the Directors, there is no ultimate controlling party.

The largest group of undertakings for which group accounts have been drawn up is that headed by United Learning Ltd. Copies of the group accounts can be obtained from Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, PE3 6SB.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**28. Financial instruments**

	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Financial assets</b>		
Financial assets measured at fair value	<b>652</b>	<i>691</i>
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	<b>129,057</b>	<i>147,135</i>
	<b>129,709</b>	<i>147,826</i>
	<b>2025</b>	<i>2024</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Financial liabilities</b>		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	<b>17,825</b>	<i>17,956</i>

**United Church Schools Trust**

England & Wales - Charity number 1016538

---

# Accounts

---

Registered number: 02780748  
Charity number: 1016538

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

---

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

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**CONTENTS**

---

	Page
<b>Reference and administrative details of the Company, its Trustees and advisers</b>	1 - 2
<b>Trustees' report</b>	3 - 23
<b>Independent auditor's report on the financial statements</b>	24 - 28
<b>Statement of financial activities</b>	29
<b>Balance sheet</b>	30 - 31
<b>Statement of cash flows</b>	32
<b>Notes to the financial statements</b>	33 - 64

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

---

**Trustees** Mr Christian Brodie (appointed 18 April 2024)  
Mrs Melissa Geiger  
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson, Chair  
Mr Ben Gordon  
Mr Richard Greenhalgh (resigned 23 May 2024)  
Dame Reena Keeble  
Dr Zoe Asensio-Sanchez (appointed 1 January 2024, resigned 24 September 2024)

Biographies for Trustees can be found at [www.unitedlearning.org.uk](http://www.unitedlearning.org.uk)

**Company registered number**

02780748

**Charity registered number**

1016538

**Registered office**

Worldwide House  
Thorpe Wood  
Peterborough  
PE3 6SB

**Company secretary**

Mrs Alison Hussain

**Chief executive officer**

Sir Jon Coles

**Senior management team**

Sir Jon Coles, Chief Executive Officer  
Mr Benjamin Antell, Director of Secondary Education  
Mrs Fiona Boulton, Director of Independent Schools  
Mrs Kate Bradley, Director of HR  
Mr Darran Ellison-Lee, Director of Primary Education  
Mrs Suzanne Howard, Director of Professional Development  
Mrs Louise Johnston, Chief Financial Officer  
Ms Anna Paige, Director of Strategy and Performance  
Ms Lauren Thorpe, Chief Transformation Officer

**Independent auditor**

Grant Thornton UK LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
17th Floor  
103 Colmore Row  
Birmingham  
B3 3AG

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**  
**(CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

---

**Bankers**                      Barclays Bank PLC  
One Snowhill  
Snowhill Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6GN

**Solicitors**                    HCR Hewitsons LLP  
Elgin House  
Billing Road  
Northampton  
NN1 5BA

Stone King LLP  
3rd Floor  
Bateman House  
82-88 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB2 1LQ

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

---

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) (the Charitable Company) for the year ended 31 August 2024. The Trustees confirm that the Trustees' Report and financial statements of the Charitable Company comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Charitable Company's governing document and the provisions of 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) ("SORP 2019").

### **About United Learning**

The roots of the United Learning Group can be traced back nearly 140 years. Over this period, we have always focused on meeting the most important social and educational challenges of the day, with the aim of providing excellent education to children and young people across the country. We seek to improve the life chances of all the children and young people we serve and make it our mission to bring out 'the best in everyone' – pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

We provide a broad education, which prepares children and young people to progress in learning and to make a success of their lives. We focus sharply on the evidence of what makes it more likely that children and young people will progress and succeed, apply that to our practice and continue to learn and develop our schools. We make it a priority to provide teachers with excellent professional support and development, so that every child receives an excellent experience.

Our strength as a group of schools lies in the unique collaboration between the state and independent sectors, in our national reach and growing regional clusters and in our dedication to excellence and to continuous improvement. We believe that each of our schools is and should be distinctive – each is committed to developing its own strengths and identity while sharing our core values, common principles and a commitment to the highest standards.

As of 31 August 2024, United Learning – the trading name of the Charitable Group – comprises 14 independent schools operated within United Church Schools Trust ("UCST"), 90 state sector academies and 2 standalone nurseries operated within United Learning Trust ("ULT"), and a central office function that serves all our schools. Together, the Group's schools educate around 75,000 children and young people and employ nearly 12,000 members of staff.

### **Constitution and objects**

United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) is registered with the Charity Commission (No. 1016538) and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales), governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended in 2004. The Charitable Company is established for charitable purposes and in accordance with its Memorandum of Association its principal activity is to provide a liberal, practical and general education for children which includes religious instruction in the doctrine and duties of Christianity.

### **Members of the Board (hereafter called "Trustees")**

The present membership of the Board is set out under Reference and Administrative Details. All Trustees served throughout the year except where indicated.

Each member of the Board of Trustees holds one share in United Learning Ltd ("ULL"), the ultimate parent undertaking.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**Appointment of Trustees**

The Board has the power to appoint any person as an additional Trustee or to fill a casual vacancy. A Trustee holds office for three years, after which they must resign. They may remain in office for a further three years with the consent of the Board. Following this, they shall be eligible for re-election annually upon the proposal of the Chair.

The training and induction provided for new Trustees is dependent upon their existing experience. Where necessary, induction will provide training on charity, educational, legal and financial matters. All new Trustees are given tours of the Charitable Company's schools and the chance to meet with staff and students. They are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role as Trustees. Induction is tailored specifically to the individual. The Company Secretary works with the Trustees to identify training needs and steps to keep the Trustees updated regarding the regulatory environment.

**Strategic report**

**Strategies and activities**

The principal object of the Charitable Company is set out above.

Founded in 1883 as an educational charity anchored in the Church of England, the Charitable Company manages the operation of a group of Independent Schools to provide education for students of different abilities between the ages of 0 and 18. Its admission policies welcome people from all employment, faiths and backgrounds. In 2001, it created a subsidiary charity, United Learning Trust ("ULT") a multi-academy trust, to extend its work into some of the most challenging inner-city areas through the City Academy programme, and to this day the Charitable Company remains the sponsor of ULT.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

## **Operating review**

### **Framework for Excellence**

Our 'Framework for Excellence' is at the heart of everything we do at United Learning. It sets out the five key principles that we believe are vital to an excellent education for children and young people.

### **Best From Everyone**

Our aim is to bring out the best in everyone. So we must expect the best from everyone, all the time. Every child is a special individual, capable of extraordinary things. Who can know the limits of any child's potential? So, we expect unreasonably - we constantly challenge children to do what they think they can't, to persist, to work hard and to be at their best.

From every adult we expect the same: that they are at their best, expect unreasonably of themselves, are determined and resilient and pass those expectations on to the children in all they do. We act with the utmost love, care and good faith - the highest standards come with the greatest attention to the wellbeing of all.

### **Powerful Knowledge**

Our most important purpose is to teach young people things they would not learn outside school, which free them to think and act more powerfully in their lives. Words and numbers are our most powerful ways of representing the world. Mastery of language and fluent mathematical skills are therefore our priority. We aim to prepare young people to make a success of their lives: a core entitlement to subject-based learning; the development of talents; an understanding of work and society.

Worthwhile learning is often hard. Inspiring teaching is what gives access to difficult concepts and the thrill of intellectual discovery. Powerful knowledge is not static or backward-looking. It includes the ability to critique, challenge the status quo, think and learn.

### **Education with Character**

Academic success is very important. Exam passes are an important aspect of that. But there is more to a good education. Our schools also aim to develop character, compassion and service. Young people are expected to contribute to their school and to society; to try things which they think they cannot do; to persist in the face of difficulty; to become resilient in overcoming obstacles; to manage themselves; to work independently on things which challenge them; to work with others and in teams; to be courageous and caring; to lead.

We want young people to look back on a joyful schooling which has inspired and challenged them, given them wide opportunity and prepared them for the ups and downs of life.

### **Leadership in Every Role**

Our children are leaders of the future. We expect them to start today - taking advantage of structured opportunities to lead and taking responsibility for themselves and others. Every adult in the school is a leader. In every word, tone and gesture, they set direction and expectation. We expect every adult to take responsibility to do what is right for the children.

All those in formal leadership positions create the climate in which others work. They demand the highest standards, build a performance culture, develop their teams and create the space for others to lead. All leaders listen, grow relationships, act with integrity and care and expect the best from themselves and others in building a happy, confident school.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

### **Continuous Improvement**

However good we are, we can be better. We constantly look for improvements and implement them with pace. We look for ideas for improvement inside the organisation and out; we observe one another; we steal good ideas with pride and look to make them better; we work together to improve.

We always look at the evidence and are rigorous in evaluating impact. We stop or change things which aren't working; we improve things which are. We aim for high leverage: high impact for low effort and low cost. We constantly look to have more impact for less cost and effort and to spend every pound wisely.

### **Achievements and performance**

We continue to follow our five-year strategy, agreed in 2021 and covering the period 2021-2026.

We have a number of performance indicators against which we assess our success and progress in achieving our objectives, covering:

- Delivery of excellent standards of education to children and young people
- Recruitment and retention of high-quality staff, including a strong pipeline of trainee teachers
- Achieving in-year budgets and ensuring that its schools are financially sustainable
- Making a meaningful contribution to the communities its schools serve and the wider education system

Progress against nonfinancial indicators is set out below, against the relevant areas of our strategy. (Reporting includes all schools that joined United Learning before September 2023.)

### **Great places to learn**

Our schools aim to bring out the best in their pupils, regardless of their starting points or backgrounds, through developing the whole person and preparing young people for success at school and in their lives, through excellent pastoral care and through the quality of relationships and the environment in which their pupils learn.

Our approach to curriculum and teaching, which is seen in all United Learning schools, emphasises deep, subject-based learning, designed to enable young people to master complex ideas and techniques. Every school in the group receives the challenge and support they need to ensure that across the curriculum, young people access this entitlement, building a strong conceptual framework to which new ideas are added in a logical sequence through skilled teaching, based on Rosenshine's principles of instruction. Over the course of the year we have continued to develop our United Learning Curriculum as a non-compulsory but comprehensive high-quality set of resources and materials available to all teachers in the group.

Performance across our secondary schools at GCSE and A level remained broadly stable relative to 2023, maintaining the positive outcomes seen since the resumption of examinations post-pandemic and above or in line with national average performance.

#### **At GCSE:**

- 27% of all entries achieved grade 9 (27% in 2023)
- 62% of all entries achieved a grade 7 or above (61% in 2023)
- 49% of students achieved a grade 7 or above in both English and maths (53% in 2023)

Overall, at GCSE our schools achieved value-added of 0.55 (meaning that students achieved on average just over half a grade higher in every subject than would have been predicted from their starting point).

#### **At A-level:**

- 52% of entries achieved A\*A grades (50% in 2023)
- 75% of entries achieved A\*B grades (75% in 2023)
- 89% of entries achieved A\*C grades (91% in 2023)

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

Overall, at A level our schools achieved value-added of 0.17 (meaning that students achieved on average just under a fifth of a grade higher in every subject than would have been predicted from their starting point).

54% of students who left our independent school sixth forms in summer 2024 progressed to Oxbridge or to Russell Group university destinations, with a further 15% progressing to a 'top third' university outside of this group (69% in total, compared to 58% in 2023). 3% of students progressed to an apprenticeship (unchanged from 2023).

We introduced a new 'Pupil Charter' in September 2023, setting out the experiences our schools commit to providing their pupils, through their curricular and co-curricular offer. Children and young people from across our schools participated in a number of Groupwide events and initiatives such as the annual International Art Competition, the StorySLAM creative writing competition, Student Leadership Programme for primary pupils and Social Action Programme for secondary students as well as the Olympic-inspired Paris 2024 to encourage participation in sport and active lifestyles.

During the year three of the Charitable Group's independent schools (Ashford School, Dunottar School, Tranby School) were inspected by ISI under the new inspection framework introduced in September 2023. Each school met the standards.

Each year we survey pupils and parents regarding their experience of our schools. In surveys carried out in November 2023:

- 98% of prep pupils and 89% of secondary pupils agreed they were proud of their school
- 94% of prep pupils and 88% of secondary pupils agreed that they belong in their school
- 88% of prep parents and 79% of secondary parents said they would recommend their child's school to family and friends.

### **Great places to work**

Our schools aim to bring out the best in every colleague, through excellent professional development, a high-quality working environment and resources and strong relationships with students and other colleagues, so that every child and young person has a wonderful experience of school, and every adult has a meaningful role and the opportunity to develop their career.

Recruitment to our initial teacher training has been extremely strong, despite wider recruitment challenges across the sector. During 2023-24 224 people trained to become teachers with United Teaching and were recommended for Qualified Teaching Status. 92% have been retained into Early Career Teaching roles in United Learning and beyond. We have achieved our highest ever enrolment for 2024-25, with 370 trainee teachers starting in September 2024.

Retention remains a challenge in common with the wider sector. Staff retention across our independent schools decreased for both teachers and support staff. Voluntary turnover for teachers was 12.1% in August 2024 on a 12-month rolling basis (August 2023: 8.9%) and 13.7% for support staff at the same point (2023: 13.3%).

We continue to deliver high quality professional development programmes to colleagues within and beyond United Learning: internal leadership development programmes; national professional qualifications; networks for women and minority ethnic colleagues to support progression into leadership and an apprenticeship programme (delivering apprenticeships at level 3 for Teaching Assistant, Early Years Educator and HR Support together with a teacher apprenticeship delivered through United Teaching).

We are committed to ensuring that every member of staff is encouraged to aspire, learn, succeed and progress in their career and is rewarded for doing so. Over the course of the year, 10.9% of Head Teacher appointments and 7.9% of Senior Leader appointments were made internally.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

Each year we survey staff regarding their experience of working in our schools. Overall engagement dropped slightly as measured by the survey carried out in November 2023 but remained very high relative to sector and wider norms at 79% (2023: 80%). Other key responses included:

- 90% of staff said they were proud to work at their school (2023: 90%)
- 71% of staff said they felt their development was supported by their school (2023: 72%)
- 75% of staff said their school gets the best out of them (2023: 78%)
- 74% of staff said they would recommend their school as an employer to a friend or family member (2023: 77%)
- 67% of staff said they were satisfied with the balance between their work and home life (2023: 66%)
- 81% of staff said their school was well led (2023: 82%)

### **Great group to join**

We aim to offer high-quality support to our schools across school improvement, the 'back office' and in relation to compliance.

During the year we welcomed Godolphin, an all-through school based in Salisbury into the Group.

Financial results are reported separately.

### **Great contribution beyond the group**

We aim to make a great contribution beyond United Learning, to have a positive impact on our local communities beyond our schools, on the national education system and on the wider world through our commitment to sustainable operations. Our independent schools offer children and young people the opportunity to engage in volunteering and acts of service within school and beyond, supporting their development as citizens with an ethical compass, a strong sense of responsibilities to others and conscious of the impact they can have on their community, society and the planet.

We committed in 2021 to establishing a community hub in each of our clusters and are making strong progress towards this goal through United Communities. By the end of 2023-24 we had 13 community hubs established, with a further 7 ready to start development in 2024-25.

Each hub has been tailored to meet the needs of their local community. They often feature a range of common activities delivered directly by the hub, through partnerships or by local people themselves. Activities may include youth provision, early years groups, interest groups, adult education, sports and leisure activities, cost-of-living support, employment support, parent groups and courses, community gardens and community action initiatives. Across our hubs this year we have recorded:

- Over 24,000 instances of participation, across 2,000 hours of community support through various activity sessions
- A 52% increase in overall engagement and a 200% increase in school and community partnerships, with 160 partnerships being forged by our hubs
- 1,000 volunteer hours contributed to hub delivery

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

As part of our commitment to the wider education system and with the aim of making a contribution towards the improvement of education generally across the country, we make available our expertise and resources to schools beyond United Learning. In 2023-24:

- Our central teams have provided over 100 days of educational and wider support to schools outside the group, including through the DfE Trust and School Improvement programme.
- We have made available our United Learning Curriculum to schools outside the group. As well as access to a tried and tested curriculum, schools have access to benchmarking analysis for end of year assessments. We have kept fees to a minimum, with revenue invested back into curriculum and assessment development to benefit every school using it. By the end of 2023-24 72 primary schools and 20 secondary schools were using our curriculum in at least one subject.
- We continued to provide free access to teaching resources provided through Continuity Oak which was first set up during the pandemic in 2020. Over the course of the academic year, there were 292,000 active users with users visiting the site more regularly than the year before.
- We continued to open up our high-quality leadership development and apprenticeship programmes to colleagues from schools outside the group. In 2023-24 around 700 external participants were enrolled on one of our programmes.

We have also made a commitment to sustainability, through reducing our impact on the environment and the carbon emissions associated with our day-to-day operations. We are working towards a target of 50,000 tco2e per year by 2029/30. Further details of the work carried out towards this ambition in 2023-24 and the impact on carbon emissions is provided below.

### **Public benefit**

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit when reviewing the Charitable Company's aims and objectives and in planning future activities for the year.

### **Going Concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, including full consideration of the impact of the current economic and political climate, the Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The financial results of the Charitable Company for the year were underpinned by strong pupil numbers, and whilst pay inflation impacted trading results, strong cash reserves were maintained. The current year also started positively with strong pupil numbers ahead of budget. However, the imposition of VAT from January 2025, and the loss of business rate relief and the increase of National Insurance from April 2025 will have a significant impact on the finances of the Charitable Company's schools. The Charitable Company is nevertheless in a strong position and able to absorb the surplus reduction in the short-term, with reviews continuing to identify efficiencies and savings to be made in order to restore surplus margins. Various cash flow scenarios have been modelled for the period to 28 February 2026. The worst-case scenario uses pessimistic assumptions including potential pupil number reductions resulting from high costs of living, and the model builds in higher levels of inflation and increased costs. However, even in this scenario the Charitable Company continues to have adequate cash reserves to meet its liabilities as they fall due during the forecast period. In preparing these forecasts, management have considered the different levers available to them, such as operating costs savings and the timing of capital expenditure, which can improve working capital at the lower points, notwithstanding that this remains positive throughout. The Charitable Company also has available to it a wide range of contingency measures which it could use to reduce costs and/or realise funds should that prove necessary.

There is no reliance on bank loan facilities in management's assessment of going concern. Drawn balances at the balance sheet date on bank loan facilities of the parent undertaking, to which the Charitable Company is party to cross-guarantees, have since been repaid. The headroom in the different cash flow models and the

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

levers available to the Charitable Company have enabled management to conclude that there is no material uncertainty in management's going concern assessment.

Therefore, based on the current financial position and latest forecasts, the robustness of cash flow management and the level of financial reserves available in the cash flow scenarios, the Board of Trustees are confident that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future, being at least twelve months from the date of approval of these financial statements. 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 Accounting Policies.

### **Financial Review**

The total surplus for the year amounted to £18.2m (2023: £4.1m). During the year a multi-year payment scheme was introduced for parents paying independent school fees. This resulted in an increase in cash reserves and deferred income compared to the prior year. Included within these results was an actuarial (loss)/gain on defined benefit pension schemes and other pension commitments of £(127)k (2023: £125k).

The schools operated by the Charitable Company during the year were as follows:

AKS  
Ashford School  
Banstead Preparatory School  
Coworth Flexlands School  
Dunottar School  
Embley  
Godolphin  
Guildford High School  
Lincoln Minster School  
Rowan Preparatory School  
St. Ives (Haslemere)  
Surbiton High School  
The Royal School  
Tranby

The Charitable Company is a sponsor of ULT which is a subsidiary undertaking of the Charitable Company. ULT's aim is to found and manage academies under the government initiative. Academies opened to date are listed on the United Learning website.

### **Funds**

The value of restricted funds to be utilised in future years includes £1.2m (2023: £0.7m) for prize and scholarship funds and other donated funds and £1.7m (2023: £1.7m) for the sponsorship fund. Unrestricted funds amount to £47.9m (2023: £30.2m) including designated funds of £2.0m (2023: £2.4m). The assets are held in pursuance of the Charitable Company's objectives.

### **Plans for future periods**

The Charitable Company aims to continue to increase the number of pupils educated at its schools. This will be through organic growth and through mergers with other schools. The Charitable Company will continue to strive to improve the levels of performance of its students at all levels and will continue its efforts to ensure its prep students are well prepared for their secondary education and its secondary students are able to obtain jobs or a place in higher education, as they choose, once they leave its schools.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

### **Funding**

The Trustees are satisfied that the Charitable Company's assets attributable to each of its individual funds are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in relation to those funds.

### **Principal risks and uncertainties**

During the year under review, the Trustees and senior management have formally identified, and documented, the major risks to which the Charitable Company is exposed.

Those risks have been reviewed by the Risk and Audit Committee and risk management strategies have been implemented. Risk management is embedded in the day-to-day processes of the Charitable Company and its subsidiaries. The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Charitable Company is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the Charitable Company and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate our exposure to the major risks.

The principal risks include:

### **Safeguarding**

To ensure that pupils are safe, feel safe, and are fully supported in this respect by their school, and to reduce the risk of child protection or safeguarding issues the Charitable Company has Safeguarding and Child Protection policies in place. These policies, which are available online, also provide a framework for its schools to develop secure processes for identifying and supporting pupils at risk of abuse. The implementation and effectiveness of these policies and procedures, which adhere to Department for Education guidelines on safeguarding and child protection, are regularly monitored and reviewed.

### **Cyber Security**

In order to reduce the risk of data breaches and loss of access, the Charitable Company has Information Security policies in place, supported by regular training (including at induction and annual refreshers) and guidance for staff. Specific software, practices and processes are mandated across all the Charitable Company's schools to reduce opportunities for security breaches and mitigate the impact of any loss. The implementation and effectiveness of the approach are regularly monitored and reviewed, including through periodic stress testing.

### **People**

The Charitable Company depends on the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers and support staff to achieve its objectives, but currently operates in a challenging recruitment market. To mitigate the risk of not being able to recruit and retain high-quality staff the Charitable Company's pay agreements for all staff are competitive within the sector, United Teaching is increasingly delivering a supply of quality teachers, and the Group-wide recruitment and retention handbook includes policies and advice for schools, including in relation to promoting diversity and inclusion. The Charitable Company invests in the development of its staff, including through provision of bespoke leadership development programmes and apprenticeship programmes for support staff, delivered through its own training provider.

### **Financial pressures**

The Charitable Company is reliant upon the parents paying its school fees promptly and an economic downturn could have a direct impact on parents' ability to pay their fees. The imposition of VAT from January 2025, loss of business rate relief and the increase of National Insurance from April 2025 will have a significant impact on the finances of the Charitable Company's schools.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

The markets in which the Charitable Company's schools operate are highly competitive. Consequently, the schools constantly review their processes to ensure that their pupils receive a first-class education that helps them to perform to their full ability in all aspects of school life.

A large proportion of the Charitable Company's costs relate to staff salaries, which are relatively fixed each year. There is a risk that a significant drop in revenue or further pay inflation or increases in pension contributions or National Insurance may lead to an inability to cover such costs.

To mitigate these financial risks senior management closely monitor all costs, including pay, against budgets on a monthly basis. Variance analysis is undertaken to consider the impact of varying income and costs when budgets are being prepared and through monthly management accounts and reforecasts, and action plans are prepared and implemented to address any adverse impacts.

#### **Fraud**

The Charitable Company is alert to the risk of fraud involving its employees or external parties. The Group's Anti-Fraud policy and response plan is reviewed annually and shared with all employees at the start of each year. School procedures are reviewed regularly as part of our programme of internal audit visits, with reports shared with the Board's Risk and Audit Committee.

#### **Data protection**

In order to ensure that its schools are compliant with all relevant data protection legislation to mitigate the risk of access or loss of personal data, the Charitable Company carries out regular training on key aspects of the data protection framework, including annual refresher training for all staff. The Group's Company Secretary is the Charitable Company's Data Protection Officer and works with school-based colleagues to ensure that policies and procedures are up to date and to share resources and effective practice.

#### **Business continuity**

The Charitable Company requires all its schools to have in place a business continuity plan; to manage the risk to operations in the event of a major incident; these are reviewed as part of the cycle of internal audit visits. A major incident escalation process is in place and communicated to schools. To further support the effectiveness of business continuity the Executive carried out a business continuity exercise in 2024-25 and plans to provide specific training for school business managers.

#### **Pensions**

The Charitable Company also belongs to the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS") run by the relevant Local Authority for certain nonteaching staff. This is now a closed scheme relating to one school where employees transferred as part of the conversion from a maintained school. Under the application of FRS 102, the contributions made by the Charitable Company to these funded defined benefit schemes currently results in pension deficits recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities. Under FRS 102, the Charitable Company is required to account for the retirement benefits when it is committed to provide them, even if the actual provision will be many years into the future. Whilst FRS 102 may be seen as a better reflection of the obligations of the employer to fund pension promises to employees, it does not reflect the actual accounting arrangements of the Pension Fund. It requires the Charitable Company to recognise the total value of all pension obligations that have accumulated (including deferred pensions) at 31 August each year.

A better reflection of a pension fund's actual position comes from the more detailed triennial assessment made by the fund actuary. This assesses and examines the ongoing financial position of the Pension Fund. The actuarial valuation can differ considerably from the FRS 102 valuation. It is the triennial actual valuation that is used to review contribution rates to the Fund from the Charitable Company, to ensure that existing assets and future contributions will be sufficient to meet future pension payments, and thus creates a risk in terms of

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

increased contribution rates.

With regards to the LGPS risk senior management review the accounting reports prepared annually by the schemes' actuary.

**Financial risk management objectives and policies**

The Charitable Company uses various financial instruments including cash and various items such as trade debtors and trade creditors that arise directly from its operations. The main purpose of these financial instruments is to raise finance for the Charitable Company's operations.

The main risks arising from the Charitable Company's financial instruments are liquidity risk and interest rate risk.

Financial risk management is managed by the central office finance department who act as the Charitable Company's treasury function ensuring that surplus funds are deposited to maximise interest receivable. In addition, it uses the Charitable Company's facilities in the most efficient manner. Those facilities are designed to ensure that the Charitable Company has sufficient available funds for day-to-day operations and for planned expansion and capital expenditure. The Charitable Company seeks to manage financial risk by ensuring sufficient liquidity is available to meet foreseeable needs and to invest cash assets safely and profitably. Short term flexibility is achieved by overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company finances its operations through retained surpluses and overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company is exposed to price risk in terms of fees but is content that these are in line with those in the sector, and budgets accordingly. The principal credit risk for the Charitable Company arises from its debtors. Payment terms are enforced by the Charitable Company's credit control department and debt collection is outsourced as necessary. Credit risk is further managed through regular contact with any families in financial difficulty in an effort to assist.

Liquidity and cash flow risks are managed through the appropriate and carefully managed use of financial instruments with our principal bankers.

**Policies**

As part of managing our risks and to ensure good governance we outline some key policies below.

**Reserves**

The Charitable Company's reserve and funding policy is to maintain the level of available liquid funds required to support the strategic five-year goals of the Charitable Company and to cover any unforeseen circumstances including those covered by the Trust's risk management processes, whilst remaining within the debt levels agreed by Trustees and the banking covenants negotiated. When setting the appropriate level of reserves and funding Trustees are conscious that in-year funding relates to the pupils currently in schools and should be used in line with the Charitable Company's objectives, as well as to deal with unforeseen circumstances.

With this over-riding principle and also considering the size of the Charitable Company, its financial position, the economic landscape and the guidance of the Charities Commission, the Trustees consider that the appropriate level of available liquid funds to hold is equivalent to one month's expenditure on charitable operating activities. To achieve this each school is set an in-year budget target which ensures adequate resources including for estates and digital infrastructure investment as per their individual five-year plans.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Total reserves as at 31 August 2024 are £50.8m (2023: £32.6m) made up of retained restricted and unrestricted funds, comprising unrestricted general funds of £46.7m (2023: £28.6m), unrestricted designated funds of £2.0m (2023: £2.4m), an unrestricted pension fund deficit of £0.8m (2023: deficit of £0.8m) and restricted funds of £2.9m (2023: £2.4m). Retained restricted and unrestricted reserves increased during the year due to well managed budgeting and financial controls ensuring the aims of the Charitable Company were met.

Available liquid funds as at 31 August 2024 totalled £113.2m (2023: £52.3m) of which £63.1m relates to fee invoices raised and settled for multiple years education, the balance excluding bank facilities adequately covers one month's expenditure on charitable operating activities of £12.9m.

Trustees therefore consider the current level of reserves and future investment plans to be appropriate and in line with the Charitable Company's policies.

**Investment policy**

The Charitable Company's cash reserves are used to set off against borrowings in other independent schools Group companies to minimise interest charges to the independent schools Group. Cash balances are invested with Barclays Bank. During the year the investment strategy produced returns in line with the Charitable Company's expectations and market rates.

**Environmental policy**

The Charitable Group recognises that good environmental management must be an integral and fundamental part of its corporate business strategy and good educational practice. The Charitable Group therefore aims to ensure that its work is sustainable and seeks to avoid negative impact on the environment and climate. It is committed to reducing the carbon emissions associated with its operations, towards a goal of carbon neutral.

The Charitable Group seeks to engage all members of the school community in developing a sustainable approach to their work and activities so as to help it achieve its aims. The Charitable Group's commitment includes the environmentally prudent management of its buildings and operations, collaboration with suppliers to improve its indirect environmental impacts, and environmental programmes and education for its employees and pupils.

The Charitable Group has made a commitment to reduce our impact on the environment and the carbon emissions associated with our day-to-day operations. We are working towards a target of 50,000 tco2e per year by 2029/30.

This year, key activities and initiatives have included:

- Supporting schools to review their energy consumption;
- Encouraging schools to have at least one 'Meat Free Day' a week;
- Tackling food waste by using ReFood – a food recycling service that turns waste into renewable energy;
- Identifying ways to reduce paper consumption;
- Schools conducting their own travel surveys with staff and pupils to help better assess commuting-related emissions.

Key educational initiatives included participation in COP Simulation events whereby 150 secondary students from 23 United Learning schools played the part of world leaders, NGOs and media representatives in a climate conference simulation. A group of Sixth Form students also joined with their peers across the country to discuss climate change at the 'Our Earth, Our Future' events.

**Pay policy for key management personnel**

Details of the pay policy in respect of key management personnel is included in the Governance section on page 20.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

### **Employee involvement and employment of the disabled**

Employees have been consulted on issues of concern to them by means of regular consultative committee and staff meetings and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by management. Regular meetings are held with staff in our schools to brief them on major issues and discuss local issues. Each school also ensures that all staff are kept fully briefed through a variety of mechanisms, including staff meetings, notice boards, newsletters and the Group intranet United Hub.

All new staff joining the Charitable Company are fully inducted and annually the Charitable Company runs two induction programmes, lasting two days, for all teachers new to United Learning. The Charitable Company carries out exit interviews for all staff leaving the organisation and has adopted a procedure of upward feedback for senior management and the Trustees.

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

- Equal opportunities policy
- Volunteers' policy
- Health & safety policy

The Charitable Company has in place a National Recognition Agreement with the main teaching and support unions. Regular joint meetings of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) are held with this Group where matters of mutual interest are discussed and agreed upon.

The union members of the JNC report back to their members through locally appointed representatives. Each school also ensures all staff are kept fully briefed by using a variety of methods including staff meetings and newsletters.

In accordance with the Charitable Company's Equal Opportunities policy, the Charitable Company has long established fair employment practices in the recruitment, selection, retention and training of disabled staff.

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

Details of the Charitable Group's Gender Pay report can be found on its website at [unitedlearning.org.uk](http://unitedlearning.org.uk)

### **Fundraising**

Our schools occasionally fundraise for themselves or charities via events such as performances, non-school uniform days and school fairs.

Occasionally, the Group is approached by trusts or individuals who are interested in working with us and we will provide them with programme and funding information in order to explore funding opportunities that meet both parties' objectives and ethos. In prior years, the Charitable Group has received large donations from individuals in this way.

We are members of the Fundraising Regulator Fundraising Preference Service to monitor our fundraising complaints. We did not receive any complaints this year.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

### **Academies**

The Charitable Company is the sponsor of, and works very closely with, ULT in managing a group of academies. Through interaction in all of the schools and academies, the two charitable companies work together to share best practice both ways, and to ensure they give pupils every opportunity to succeed during their education. This involves such activities as group meetings at every level to share best practice and the sharing of educational resources over United Hub.

### **Access policy**

The Charitable Company works very hard to offer education to as many pupils as possible throughout England. Through its bursary policy, it widens the number of pupils attending the Charitable Company's schools. By setting up, sponsoring, and working very closely with ULT, pupils in state funded academies enjoy the same educational resources available throughout the Charitable Company's schools. The Charitable Company's schools all access United Hub, which enables teachers at any of the schools in the Group to collaborate, share resources and challenges, positively impacting on workload.

### **Bursary Policy**

The ability to offer education to children of families who would not be able to afford the school fees is very important to the Charitable Company. As a result of the desire to help children in this way the Charitable Company continued to operate its schemes of means tested financial assistance and its separate schemes of scholarships and family discounts, where parents have more than one child at one of our schools. Means tested assistance is available to those who would not otherwise be able to afford the fees and, equally importantly, in cases of hardship where pupil's education or future prospects might be at risk. Bursaries range in value from 5% to 100% of the school fee. During the year, the Charitable Company granted £0.8m (2023: £0.8m) to pupils attending its schools under means tested assistance. This equated to 0.5% of gross fees received (2023: 0.6%). Further details of our Bursary Policy and how to apply are on our website.

In addition during the year, the Charitable Company granted £253k (2023: £307k) of further discounts and £2k (2023: £4k) of payment deferrals from the £4m Hardship Fund set up during lockdown to support those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

### **Section 172 Statement**

The Charitable Company's purpose is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools which enable all young people to make a success of their lives. The Board, senior leadership team and other employees take a values-based approach to strategic, financial and operational decision making in line with this purpose and with the requirements and expectations of Section 172. Strategic priorities – informed by our long-term vision and strategy, outcomes for pupils and other key performance measures – are discussed with the Board at the start of each year. The Board sets key performance indicators and targets relating to those priorities and monitors performance against these at each Group Board meeting. They also receive reports at each Board meeting highlighting any notable successes or concerns at school level. Sub-Committees, as described in the Governance Statement, meet to enable scrutiny of a wider range of data and reports and to review progress against the strategic objectives.

The Charitable Company has a strong focus on promoting collaboration between its schools and on enabling staff to connect with colleagues across the organisation. It operates a wide range of staff networks, from subject networks to function and specialist networks, which meet regularly (generally virtually) and support the sharing of knowledge and practice. We hold termly leadership forums bringing all Headteachers together and an annual Leadership Conference engaging Heads and Chairs. Each year a group-wide induction is provided to new staff – the Best in Everyone induction – prior to the start of term, which introduces new employees to the trust and the opportunities for their professional development. Employees' views are sought through the annual staff survey, results of which are shared with the Board together with any action planned at a group level in response; all

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

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

schools develop their own annual action plans.

Trustees take steps to understand the needs and priorities of our key stakeholder groups in a number of ways. Each year the Charitable Company carries out stakeholder surveys of all parents and pupils. The results of these surveys are shared with the Board. Throughout the year Trustees take opportunities to visit schools, including discussion with staff and parents. Notes of these visits are shared with the Executive Team and with the Board. The Board has designated a named Trustee to act as the key link between the Board, the education teams and the LGBs. The Link Trustee also attends termly 'Chairs Forum' meetings with the chairs of local governing bodies. Guidance in relation to our local governing bodies makes clear the importance of having parent representation at a local level. More widely, the Charitable Company ensures that key information, policies and procedures are shared with its regulators (the Department for Education and the Information Commissioner's Office) as necessary.

The Trustees consider relationships with suppliers through their oversight of the Group procurement policy and Modern Slavery statement. The Group procurement strategy describes how the Charitable Group manages its suppliers based and criticality, how it deals with performance issues and how it works with suppliers to continually improve performance and identify new and better ways of delivering services.

**Governance**

The Board of Trustees have delegated their powers and functions to a committee of Trustees known as the Group Board. All the Trustees of United Church Schools Trust ("UCST") are members of the Group Board. Members of the Group Board also include persons who are Trustees of United Learning Trust ("ULT"), a subsidiary Charitable Company. The Group Board of Trustees has formally met 6 times during the year and the UCST Board of Trustees held 3 independent meetings. Attendance during the year at the meetings of the Trustees was as follows:

	<b>UCST meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson (Chair)	3	3
Dr Zoe Asensio-Sanchez	2	2
Mr Christian Brodie	1	1
Mr Ben Gordon	3	3
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	2	2
Dame Reena Keeble	3	3

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Group Board meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dr Zoe Asensio-Sanchez	3	5
Mr Christian Brodie (Chair)	3	3
Mr David Brown	4	5
Sir Jon Coles	7	7
Dr Stephen Critchley	1	1
Ms Karima Fahmy	6	7
Mrs Melissa Geiger	7	7
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	5	7
Mr Ben Gordon	7	7
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	6	6
Dame Sue John	5	7
Dame Reena Keeble	6	7
Mr Neil MacDonald	6	7
Dr Rania Marandos	6	7
Mr Christie Spurling	6	7

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

The Board of Trustees delegates clear responsibilities to the Schools' Local Governing Bodies ("LGBs"), whose purpose is to provide support and challenge to the school on behalf of the Board. The functions and duties of the LGBs are set out in the LGB Members' Handbook. The Group Board maintains links with the LGBs through the Head of Local Governance, and designated Trustees for the schools. The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the LGBs are invited to attend meetings of the Chairs' Forum, which meets three times in the academic year and provides advice on strategy and education, relevant continuing professional development and the opportunity for sharing of best practice with their peers. The Chairs' Forum meetings further enhance communications between LGBs and the Trustees.

The Charitable Company has a policy for managing conflicts of interest which covers processes for the recording of business and pecuniary interest and the recording of gifts and hospitality, whether accepted or not. The business interests of the Trustees and LGB members are published on our website. The Trustee's register of interests is included in the papers for every meeting and the Trustees are asked to declare any further interests at the start of each meeting. Our procurement policy requires employees to check the register of business interests prior to making procurement decisions. Where there is a potential for any perceived or real conflict of interest the policy requires staff to declare it the earliest opportunity and remove themselves from any decision-making process.

The board commissions an external review of board effectiveness every three years. The Board commissioned a consultant to carry out this external review and they reported to the Board at its April 2024 meeting. The consultant reviewed a wide range of governance documentation, observed board and committee meetings and conducted interviews with Board members, the Executive team and the Company Secretary. A written report was provided to summarise the findings and recommendations and these were presented to the Board at its April meeting.

The consultant concluded that the Board is a highly effective Board, which works as an effective team, using the appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions. The Board's composition and its practices are maintaining highly effective arrangements for independent scrutiny, holding to account and assurance. The Group Board is meaningfully supporting and contributing to the achievement of United Learning's strategic objectives.

### **Board Committees**

The Group Board has four further committees, which advise on matters defined by their terms of reference. The Committees are the Finance Committee, the Risk and Audit Committee, the Nominations and Remuneration Committee and the Education Standards and Performance Committee. The minutes of all committees are made available to the Board of Trustees at meetings of the Group Board and any matters of concern are highlighted.

The Finance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Charitable Company properly plans the use of its finances and is adequately funded to undertake projected expenditure.
- review and recommend the annual budgets for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- monitor financial performance against agreed budgets.
- ensure, with the Risk and Audit Committee, that the Charitable Company's financial statements are supported accurately by management accounts.
- monitor and review the Charitable Company's arrangements in relation to investments and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees in relation to the appointment and removal of investment advisors.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Attendance at meetings during the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dr Zoe Asensio-Sanchez	2	2
Mr Christian Brodie	1	1
Mr David Brown	1	2
Dr Stephen Critchley	1	1
Mr Ben Gordon	4	4
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	3	3
Mr Neil MacDonald (Chair)	4	4

The Risk and Audit Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure implementation of a risk management framework for the Group.
- ensure an adequate internal control environment is established.
- ensure the Charities' annual financial statements are reconciled to the management accounts.
- ensure effective audit functions are in place (both external and internal).
- ensure adequate risk management processes are in place.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Andrew Balfour	2	2
Dr Stephen Critchley	1	1
Ms Karima Fahmy (Chair)	4	4
Mrs Melissa Geiger	4	4
Mr Neil MacDonald	2	2
Mr Yong Shen	1	1
Mrs Janet Swadling	1	1

A Group Nominations and Remuneration Committee exists to oversee the appointments of the Group Chairman and Trustees and to approve Executive salaries and remuneration. The Committee is chaired by Ben Gordon, and it is advised by the Director of HR and the Company Secretary as appropriate.

The Nominations and Remuneration Committee regularly reviews the terms of office, skills and attributes of the Board of Trustees. On the basis of this, the Committee plans succession in order to ensure that the Board has available to it the range of skills and experience required to discharge its responsibilities. The Committee makes recommendations to the Board as to the need for new Trustees and leads the process of recruitment of Trustees as required, making recommendations of appointment to the Board. The Committee ensures that appointment is on merit, but also seeks to ensure that the Board reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

In considering Executive pay, the Committee takes account of the needs of the organisation for skills, experience and personal capabilities to enable it to achieve its objectives and the price of such skills in the labour market. The Committee considers that in order to attract and retain leaders with the skills to achieve organisational objectives, senior pay must be competitive in the marketplace, taking account of the pay rates of comparably senior and skilled employees in other organisations – particularly in comparable organisations in education, in public service and in the charitable sector, and taking account of the transferability of skills into other sectors.

The Committee is also mindful of the need for charities and organisations in receipt of public funding to set pay rates which are publicly defensible and seen to be appropriate.

The Committee considers annual pay in relation to the performance of the organisation, and of individuals against their objectives and in their broader contribution and in any changes to job role.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Christian Brodie	1	1
Mr Ben Gordon (Chair)	4	4
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	3	3
Dame Sue John	1	1
Dr Rania Marandos	3	4

The Group Education Standards and Performance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Trust discharges its responsibilities for education improvement in providing excellent education so that pupils are able to progress, achieve and to go on to succeed in life.
- advise the Group Board with respect to Group strategic educational priorities and key performance indicators.
- provide an overview, scrutiny and challenge of education performance of all schools.
- receive reports from the Executive regarding education standards and performance of schools, and to hold the Executive to account, against the approved Group strategic priorities and key performance indicators related to schools' educational performance.
- review annually the performance of local/cluster governing bodies to ensure they are operating at maximum effectiveness.
- receive reports from Executive regarding safeguarding, and to hold the Executive to account regarding the effectiveness of policies and process designed to keep children safe.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Christian Brodie	1	1
Sir Jon Coles	3	3
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	2	3
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	2	3
Dame Sue John	3	3
Dame Reena Keeble (Chair)	3	3
Mr Christie Spurling	3	3

**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 ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Charitable Company's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Charitable Company for the year from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

### **Capacity to Handle Risk**

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the Charitable Company 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 Charitable Company's significant risks that has been in place for the year from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

The Charitable Group has a risk register that identifies the key strategic risks facing the Group, the actions taken to mitigate those risks and the owners of those actions. Risk control is exercised by the senior management team, which reviews the risk register on a monthly basis. The Risk and Audit Committee considers the risk register at each of their meetings. Its views are reported to the Board of Trustees via the Committee's minutes and the Chair's report to the Group Board.

### **The Risk and Control Framework**

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

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

The Group employs an Internal Auditor and a Head of Internal Audit who have a direct reporting line to the Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee. The Internal Audit service operates best practice professional standards and guidelines. Internal Audit independently and objectively reviews, on a continuous basis, the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Charitable Company's objectives, and contributes to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

Internal Audit's role includes giving advice on internal controls and performing a range of checks on the Charitable Company's core financial systems. An increased level of control checks were carried out in the year including increased testing of school level controls, covering local governance, procurement, income, cash management, human resources, payroll and fixed assets.

Furthermore, testing of non-financial systems and central office functions were conducted, including reviews of the organisation's, health and safety arrangements, staff recruitment and retention management, new school on-boarding projects and purchase ledger arrangements.

On a quarterly basis, the Head of Internal Audit reports to the Board of Trustees through the Risk and Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities.

For the year ended 31 August 2024, based on the work undertaken, an internal audit opinion of good assurance was given on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

These arrangements can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period.

**Chief Executive**

The Trustees delegate the day to day responsibility of the running of the Charitable Company to the Chief Executive Officer.

**Connected charities**

There is a relationship between United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) and other charities as set out in note 27.

**Trustees' indemnities**

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Charitable Company has insurance in place to protect Trustees and Officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Charitable Company business.

**Statement of Trustees' (collectively known as the Board) responsibilities**

The Trustees (who are also directors of United Church Schools Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law), including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. 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 the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102).
- 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.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charitable Company will continue in operation.

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 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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**Disclosure of information to auditor**

The Trustees confirm that:

- so far as each Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charitable Company's auditor is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charitable Company's auditor is aware of that information.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson*

**Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson**  
Chair Trustee  
Date: 13/2/2025

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

---

## **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (the 'Charitable Company') for the year ended 31 August 2024, which comprise Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards including Financial Reporting Standard 102; The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Charitable Company's affairs as at 31 August 2024 and of its 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 including FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, 2019 Edition; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

## **Basis for opinion**

We have been appointed as auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with regulations made under that Act. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section' of our report. We are independent of the Charitable Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## **Conclusions relating to going concern**

We are responsible for concluding on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify the auditor's opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Charitable Company to cease to continue as a going concern.

In our evaluation of the Trustees' conclusions, we considered the inherent risks associated with the Charitable Company's business model including effects arising from macro-economic uncertainties such as the cost of living crisis and introduction of VAT on private schools as well as other taxation changes, we assessed and challenged the reasonableness of estimates made by the trustees and the related disclosures and analysed how those risks might affect the charitable company's financial resources or ability to continue operations over the going concern period.

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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

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 Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

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

**Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Trustees' 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is 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 Strategic Report and the Trustees' Report, prepared for the purposes of company law, included in the Trustees' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- the Strategic Report and the Trustees' Report included in the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matter on which we are required to report under the Companies Act 2006**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Charitable Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Strategic Report or the Directors' Report included in the Trustees' Report.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

### **Responsibilities of Trustees**

As explained more fully in the Responsibilities Statement set out on page 22, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Charitable Company and the sector in which it operates. We determined that the following laws and regulations were most applicable: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP, Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006;
- We understood how the Charitable Company is complying with these legal and regulatory frameworks by making inquiries of management and those charged with governance. We enquired of management and those charged with governance whether there were any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations, or whether they had any knowledge of actual or suspected fraud. We corroborated the results of our enquiries through our review of board minutes, through our legal and professional expenses review and through inquiries of solicitors who served during the period;
- We assessed the susceptibility of the Charitable Company's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur and the risk of material override of controls. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:
  - Identifying and assessing the design effectiveness of relevant controls management has in place to prevent and detect fraud
  - Challenging the assumptions and judgements made by management in applying its significant accounting policies
  - Identifying and testing journal entries, with a focus on manual postings, journal entries which directly impacted the surplus reported in the Statement of Financial Activities and journal entries posted in the closing and accounts preparation period
  - Identifying and testing related party transactions
  - Performing a review of Board & Committee Meeting minutes to identify any matters discussed which may bear upon our audit opinion

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

- These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error and detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it;
- Assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included consideration of the engagement team's:
  - Understanding of, and practical experience with, audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity through appropriate training and participation
  - Knowledge and experience of the charity and education sectors
  - Understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to the Charitable Company, including the provisions of the applicable legislation and the guidance issued by the Charities Commission.
- The team communications in respect of potential non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations, including the potential for fraud in revenue through manipulation of income and management override of controls; and
- In assessing the potential risks of material misstatement, we obtained an understanding of:
  - the Charitable Company's operations, including the nature of its income and expenditure and its services and of its objectives and strategies, to understand the classes of transactions, account balances, expected financial statement disclosure and business risks that may result in risks of material misstatement
  - The Charitable Company's control environment, including: the policies and procedures implemented by the Charitable Company to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework and relevant laws and regulations.
    - ◆ The Policies and procedures implemented by the Charitable Company to ensure compliance with laws and regulations, and the relevant financial reporting framework
    - ◆ The adequacy of procedures for authorisation of transactions, and
    - ◆ Procedures to ensure that possible breaches of laws and regulations are appropriately reviewed.

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](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

**Use of our report**

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

*Jim McLarnon*

**Jim McLarnon ACA**  
**Senior Statutory Auditor**

for and on behalf of  
**Grant Thornton UK LLP**

Chartered Accountants  
Statutory Auditor

Birmingham

Date: 13/2/2025

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

	Note	Restricted funds 2024 £000	Unrestricted funds 2024 £000	Total funds 2024 £000	<i>Total funds 2023 £000</i>
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	4	440	13,641	14,081	4,843
Charitable activities	2,3	-	160,833	160,833	139,311
Investments	6	-	1,051	1,051	-
<b>Total income</b>		<b>440</b>	<b>175,525</b>	<b>175,965</b>	<b>144,154</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable activities	5	3	157,671	157,674	140,199
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>157,671</b>	<b>157,674</b>	<b>140,199</b>
<b>Net income before net gains/(losses) on investments</b>		<b>437</b>	<b>17,854</b>	<b>18,291</b>	<b>3,955</b>
Net gains/(losses) on investments		11	5	16	(6)
<b>Net income</b>		<b>448</b>	<b>17,859</b>	<b>18,307</b>	<b>3,949</b>
Transfers between funds	15	(3)	3	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds before other recognised gains carried forward</b>		<b>445</b>	<b>17,862</b>	<b>18,307</b>	<b>3,949</b>
<b>Other recognised gains:</b>					
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension schemes	23	-	(127)	(127)	125
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>445</b>	<b>17,735</b>	<b>18,180</b>	<b>4,074</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Total funds brought forward		2,436	30,171	32,607	28,533
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>2,881</b>	<b>47,906</b>	<b>50,787</b>	<b>32,607</b>

All activities are continuing and there are no other recognised gains and losses.

The notes on pages 33 to 64 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**  
**REGISTERED NUMBER: 02780748**

**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024**

	Note	2024 £000	2023 £000
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	9	1,456	1,756
Tangible assets	10	20,377	8,543
Investments	11	691	210
		<b>22,524</b>	<b>10,509</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stocks	12	135	4
Debtors	13	60,124	65,155
Cash and cash equivalents	18	91,248	20,323
		<b>151,507</b>	<b>85,482</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(122,454)	(62,575)
		<b>29,053</b>	<b>22,907</b>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>29,053</b>	<b>22,907</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>51,577</b>	<b>33,416</b>
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>51,577</b>	<b>33,416</b>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	23	(790)	(809)
<b>Total net assets</b>		<b>50,787</b>	<b>32,607</b>
<b>Charity funds</b>			
Restricted funds	15	2,881	2,436
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted funds excluding pension liability	15	48,696	30,980
Pension reserve	15	(790)	(809)
Total unrestricted funds	15	<b>47,906</b>	<b>30,171</b>
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>50,787</b>	<b>32,607</b>

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024**

---

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson*

Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson

Date: 13/2/2025

The notes on pages 33 to 64 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

	Note	2024 £000	2023 £000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash provided by operating activities	17	73,955	4,350
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,823)	(2,975)
Net cash acquired in business combinations		642	-
Proceeds from the sale of tangible fixed assets		-	1
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(2,181)</b>	<b>(2,974)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Interest paid		(849)	(743)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		<b>(849)</b>	<b>(743)</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>70,925</b>	<b>633</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		20,323	19,690
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	18	<b>91,248</b>	<b>20,323</b>

The notes on pages 33 to 64 form part of these financial statements

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies**

**1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - 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) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

United Church Schools Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £'000.

**1.2 Consolidation**

Consolidated financial statements have not been prepared as consolidated financial statements for the Charitable Company's ultimate parent undertaking, United Learning Ltd, are publicly available from the Charitable Company's registered office and incorporate the results of the Charitable Company and its subsidiary undertakings. These financial statements therefore represent the results of United Church Schools Trust only.

**1.3 Income**

All income is recognised once the Charitable Company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donated services or facilities are recognised when the Charitable Company has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the Charitable Company of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the Charitable Company which is the amount the Charitable Company would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Bursaries and discounts awarded are charged in the year to which they relate, and are offset against the associated income.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.4 Expenditure**

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

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities. Charitable activities are costs incurred in the Charitable Company's educational operations. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the Charitable Company and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

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

Restructuring costs are recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to undertake restructuring activities, which includes redundancy payments.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

**1.5 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Company for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

**1.6 Company status**

The Charitable Company is a company limited by guarantee. United Learning Ltd (Company number 00018582) is the ultimate parent undertaking and sole member of the Charitable Company. In the event of the Charitable Company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charitable Company.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.7 Going concern**

The Trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate, considering whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Charitable Company to continue as a going concern. The Trustees make this assessment in respect of a period at least one year from the signing date of these financial statements. The Trustees have considered the effects of the current economic and political climate in reaching their conclusions, preparing an annual budget and monitoring performance against it with forecasts for the balance of the financial year and beyond, and preparing a range of cash flow forecast scenarios. The Charitable Company maintains reserves to meet unexpected obligations and forecast models indicate that, even allowing for the rising costs of inflation including wage inflation, the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The financial statements have therefore been prepared on a going concern basis as discussed in the Trustees' Report on page 9.

Various cash flow scenarios have been modelled for the period to 28 February 2026. The worst-case scenario uses pessimistic assumptions including potential pupil number reductions resulting from the impact of the imposition of VAT and high costs of living, and the model builds in higher levels of inflation and increased costs such as pay. However, even in this scenario the Charitable Company continues to have adequate cash reserves to meet its liabilities as they fall due during the forecast period.

There is no reliance on bank loan facilities in management's assessment of going concern. Drawn balances at the balance sheet date on bank loan facilities of the parent undertaking, to which the Charitable Company is party to cross-guarantees, have since been repaid. The headroom in the different cash flow models and the levers available to the Charitable Company have enabled management to conclude that there is no material uncertainty in management's going concern assessment.

**1.8 Intangible fixed assets and amortisation**

Intangible assets are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment. Amortisation begins when the intangible asset is available for use, and is charged straight line over the useful economic life of 8 - 10 years.

**1.9 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.9 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation (continued)**

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives.

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Freehold land	- not depreciated
Freehold buildings	- 50 years
Leasehold improvements	- Term of the lease
Motor vehicles	- 4 years
Fixtures and fittings	- 10 years
Computer equipment	- 3 years

Tangible assets donated to the Charitable Company are capitalised based on their fair values which then represents the deemed historic cost of the asset.

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.

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

**1.10 Investments**

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as 'Gains/(Losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

**1.11 Stocks**

Stock is held at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell.

**1.12 Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charitable Company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

**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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.14 Taxation**

The Charitable Company is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Charitable Company is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

**1.15 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.

**1.16 Cash and cash equivalents**

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

**1.17 Liabilities and Provisions**

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 Charitable Company anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar charges.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.18 Financial instruments**

The Charitable Company only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors, loans from banks and other third parties, loans to related parties and investments in non-puttable ordinary shares.

Financial assets that are measured at cost and amortised cost are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

For financial assets measured at amortised cost, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. If a financial asset has a variable interest rate, the discount rate for measuring any impairment loss is the current effective interest rate determined under the contract.

For financial assets measured at cost less impairment, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and best estimate, which is an approximation of the amount that the Charitable Company would receive for the asset if it were to be sold at the balance sheet date.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset and the net amount reported in the Balance Sheet when there is an enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.19 Pensions**

The Charitable Company make contributions to a number of defined contribution pension plans for non-teaching staff and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charitable Company to the fund in respect of the year.

Retirement benefits to teaching staff are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS"). Retirement benefits to certain support staff are provided by 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 Charitable Company 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. As stated in note 23, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore 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 scheme and assets are held separately from those of the Charitable Company 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 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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.20 Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty**

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

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

*Actuarial valuations for Local Government Pension Scheme*

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost/(income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 23, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. For example, a 0.1% increase in discount rate would decrease the liability by £111k and a 0.1% increase in inflation would increase the liability by £112k. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation 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. Judgement has also been made in applying a limit to the net pension surplus recognised as the present value of future service contributions is higher than the present value of future service costs.

The estimates and assumptions that have a lower risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

*Unfunded pension obligations*

The Charitable Company has also made provision for unfunded pension obligations amounting to £0.8m (2023: £0.8m). The key assumptions made in computing this provision comprise mortality assumptions and discount rates, with the total obligation arising as a result having been disclosed in note 23. Any changes in these assumptions would impact the carrying amount of the liability.

*Depreciation of tangible fixed assets*

Depreciation amounting to £2.2m (2023: £1.6m) is computed based on the best estimate of the useful economic lives of the relevant assets and their ultimate residual value.

*Provision for bad debts*

An allowance for doubtful debts amounting to £1.0m (2023: £1.1m) is maintained for estimated losses resulting from the inability of the Charitable Company's fee debtors to make required payments. The Charitable Company applies a policy for providing for bad debts which is periodically reviewed based on an assessment of actual outcomes against those expected.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.21 Exceptional items**

Costs classified as exceptional relate to costs which are non-recurring and outside of the normal charitable activities of the company as disclosed in note 8.

**2. School fees receivable and catering income**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Gross fee income receivable	<b>135,917</b>	<i>124,750</i>
Scholarships, bursaries and reduced fees	<b>(10,317)</b>	<i>(10,387)</i>
Catering income	<b>2,111</b>	<i>1,966</i>
<b>Net fee income receivable</b>	<b>127,711</b>	<i>116,329</i>

In 2024, of the total school fees receivable and catering income, £127,711k (2023: £116,329k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2023: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**3. Other educational related income**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Support services to other schools and academies	<b>18,990</b>	<i>13,758</i>
Early years funding	<b>1,478</b>	<i>1,190</i>
Pupil registration fees	<b>368</b>	<i>361</i>
Charges for additional classes	<b>1,805</b>	<i>1,557</i>
Charges for school trips	<b>5,629</b>	<i>3,640</i>
Other school income	<b>3,780</b>	<i>1,998</i>
Rents and lettings	<b>1,072</b>	<i>478</i>
	<b>33,122</b>	<i>22,982</i>

In 2024, of the other educational related income, £33,122k (2023: £22,982k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2023: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**4. Voluntary income**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Other sponsorship and donations received	<b>3,837</b>	<i>3,773</i>
Gift aid from subsidiary undertakings	<b>1,144</b>	<i>1,070</i>
Net assets transferred from other charities	<b>9,100</b>	<i>-</i>
	<b>14,081</b>	<i>4,843</i>
	<b>14,081</b>	<i>4,843</i>

In 2024 of the total voluntary income, £13,641k (2023: £4,843k) was to unrestricted funds and £440k (2023: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**5. Analysis of total resources expended**

	Staff costs 2024 £000	Other costs 2024 £000	Depreciation 2024 £000	Total 2024 £000	Total 2023 £000
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
<b>Direct costs</b>					
Educational supplies	78,353	15,105	-	<b>93,458</b>	84,193
Staff development	372	96	-	<b>468</b>	374
Examination fees	-	905	-	<b>905</b>	773
Technology costs	3,841	2,708	-	<b>6,549</b>	5,758
	<u>82,566</u>	<u>18,814</u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>101,380</b></u>	<u>91,098</u>
<b>Support costs</b>					
Recruitment and support	-	594	-	<b>594</b>	607
Premises costs	4,455	13,384	-	<b>17,839</b>	16,270
Insurance	-	1,174	-	<b>1,174</b>	1,037
Catering	-	7,685	-	<b>7,685</b>	6,446
Marketing	1,400	1,696	-	<b>3,096</b>	2,730
Legal and professional	-	1,453	-	<b>1,453</b>	1,156
Other support costs	17,579	2,835	-	<b>20,414</b>	17,712
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	2,450	<b>2,450</b>	1,863
Loss/(profit) on disposal of assets	-	4	-	<b>4</b>	(1)
Bank interest and charges	-	1,051	-	<b>1,051</b>	862
	<u>23,434</u>	<u>29,876</u>	<u><b>2,450</b></u>	<u><b>55,760</b></u>	<u>48,682</u>
<b>Governance costs</b>					
Auditor costs - audit fees	-	129	-	<b>129</b>	64
Company Secretariat costs	355	47	-	<b>402</b>	353
Trustees' meeting and travel	-	3	-	<b>3</b>	2
	<u>106,355</u>	<u>48,869</u>	<u>2,450</u>	<u><b>157,674</b></u>	<u>140,199</u>
<b>Total 2024</b>	<u><u>106,355</u></u>	<u><u>48,869</u></u>	<u><u>2,450</u></u>	<u><u><b>157,674</b></u></u>	<u><u>140,199</u></u>
<i>Total 2023</i>	<u><u>96,734</u></u>	<u><u>41,602</u></u>	<u><u>1,863</u></u>	<u><u>140,199</u></u>	

In 2024, of the total resources expended, £157,671k (2023: £140,199k) was to unrestricted funds and £3k (2023: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Total resources expended include:

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Auditor's remuneration:		
Audit of the charitable company's annual financial statements	71	64
Non-audit services	10	9
Depreciation:		
Tangible fixed assets, owned	2,150	1,564
Amortisation: Intangible fixed assets	300	299
Operating lease rentals	1,280	1,084
	<b>1,280</b>	<i>1,084</i>

**6. Net interest**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Bank interest receivable	1,051	-
Interest payable to Group undertakings	(847)	(743)
Bank interest payable	(2)	-
	<b>202</b>	<i>(743)</i>

**7. Staff costs**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Wages and salaries	83,851	76,770
Social security costs	8,674	7,872
Other pension costs (note 23)	13,472	11,595
Agency fees	358	497
	<b>106,355</b>	<i>96,734</i>

During the year, there were redundancy or termination payments made which amounted to £276k (2023: £859k).

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

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>No.</b>	<i>No.</i>
	<b>2,455</b>	<i>2,349</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**7. Staff costs (continued)**

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

	<b>2024</b>	2023
	<b>No.</b>	No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	<b>133</b>	110
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	<b>49</b>	36
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	<b>32</b>	11
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	<b>8</b>	10
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	<b>7</b>	4
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	<b>6</b>	7
In the band £120,001 - £130,000	<b>6</b>	5
In the band £130,001 - £140,000	<b>4</b>	3
In the band £140,001 - £150,000	<b>3</b>	3
In the band £150,001 - £160,000	<b>2</b>	2
In the band £160,001 - £170,000	<b>1</b>	-
In the band £170,001 - £180,000	<b>2</b>	1
In the band £180,001 - £190,000	<b>1</b>	1
In the band £190,001 - £200,000	<b>2</b>	2
In the band £200,001 - £210,000	<b>1</b>	1
In the band £210,001 - £220,000	<b>1</b>	-
In the band £230,001 - £240,000	-	1
In the band £260,001 - £270,000	-	1
In the band £290,001 - £300,000	<b>1</b>	-

Key management personnel, as listed on page 1, are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity. The remuneration for these individuals totalled £2,076k (2023: £2,131k).

During the year, the following amounts were paid in respect of higher paid employees as shown above:

	<b>2024</b>	2023
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Pension contributions to defined contribution, teachers' pension scheme and local government pension schemes	<b>4,242</b>	2,870

During the year, 56 higher paid employees (2023: 48) participated in defined contribution schemes, 191 (2023: 138) participated in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (operated by the Teachers' Pension Agency), 1 (2023: 2) participated in the Local Government Pension Scheme and 11 (2023: 10) did not participate in Charitable Company pension schemes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**Payment to Trustees**

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2023 - £NIL).

No Trustee, or person with a family or business connection with a Trustee, received remuneration in the year, directly or indirectly, from either the Charitable Company or a company controlled by the Charitable Company.

Expense reimbursements paid to 4 (2023: 2) Trustees during the year amounted to £3k (2023: £2k) and all related to travel and subsistence costs.

**8. Exceptional items**

Exceptional costs incurred in school closures, mergers, acquisitions and disposals during the year ended 31 August 2024 amounted to £NIL (2023: £428k).

**9. Intangible assets**

	<b>Software development £000</b>
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 September 2023	2,995
At 31 August 2024	2,995
<b>Amortisation</b>	
At 1 September 2023	1,239
Charge for the year	300
At 31 August 2024	1,539
<b>Net book value</b>	
At 31 August 2024	1,456
At 31 August 2023	1,756

All intangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**10. Tangible fixed assets**

	Freehold land and buildings £000	Long-term leasehold property £000	Fixtures and fittings £000	Computer equipment £000	Motor vehicles £000	Total £000
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 September 2023	300	2,173	15,928	4,873	847	24,121
Additions	52	31	2,031	648	61	2,823
Transfers from other trusts	10,300	-	788	59	18	11,165
Disposals	-	-	(625)	(1,563)	(181)	(2,369)
At 31 August 2024	<u>10,652</u>	<u>2,204</u>	<u>18,122</u>	<u>4,017</u>	<u>745</u>	<u>35,740</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>						
At 1 September 2023	-	909	9,435	4,514	720	15,578
Charge for the year	206	35	1,388	435	86	2,150
On disposals	-	-	(621)	(1,563)	(181)	(2,365)
At 31 August 2024	<u>206</u>	<u>944</u>	<u>10,202</u>	<u>3,386</u>	<u>625</u>	<u>15,363</u>
<b>Net book value</b>						
At 31 August 2024	<u><u>10,446</u></u>	<u><u>1,260</u></u>	<u><u>7,920</u></u>	<u><u>631</u></u>	<u><u>120</u></u>	<u><u>20,377</u></u>
At 31 August 2023	<u><u>300</u></u>	<u><u>1,264</u></u>	<u><u>6,493</u></u>	<u><u>359</u></u>	<u><u>127</u></u>	<u><u>8,543</u></u>

All tangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**11. Fixed asset investments**

		<b>Listed investments £000</b>
<b>Valuation</b>		
At 1 September 2023		210
Fair value adjustments		16
Transfer from other trusts		465
At 31 August 2024		691
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Investments at value comprise:</b>		
Listed investments	641	165
Money market deposits	50	45
	691	210

All the fixed asset investments are held in the UK.

**Subsidiary undertakings**

At 31 August 2024, the Charitable Company held more than 20% of the following:

	<b>Holding</b>	<b>Nature of the business</b>	<b>Class of share capital held</b>
	%		
United Learning Trust*	100	Education	-
Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited*	100	Dormant	-

\*Limited by guarantee

The registered office address of United Learning Trust and Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited is Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, England, PE3 6SB.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**12. Stocks**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Catering stock	<b>135</b>	<i>-</i>
Finished goods and goods for resale	<b>-</b>	<i>4</i>
	<b>135</b>	<i>4</i>

**13. Debtors**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Trade debtors	<b>30,885</b>	<i>35,247</i>
Amounts owed by Group undertakings	<b>22,460</b>	<i>25,778</i>
Other debtors	<b>2,794</b>	<i>1,555</i>
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>3,985</b>	<i>2,575</i>
	<b>60,124</b>	<i>65,155</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**14. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Trade creditors	<b>4,263</b>	<i>3,568</i>
Amounts owed to Group undertakings	<b>6</b>	<i>6</i>
Other taxation and social security	<b>2,272</b>	<i>2,037</i>
Other creditors	<b>12,716</b>	<i>12,327</i>
Accruals and deferred income	<b>103,197</b>	<i>44,637</i>
	<b>122,454</b>	<i>62,575</i>

Amounts owed to Group undertakings are unsecured, interest free and repayable on demand.

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Deferred income at 1 September 2023	<b>41,405</b>	<i>38,049</i>
Resources deferred during the year	<b>99,991</b>	<i>41,405</i>
Amounts released from previous periods	<b>(41,405)</b>	<i>(38,049)</i>
<b>Deferred income as at 31 August 2024</b>	<b>99,991</b>	<i>41,405</i>

Deferred income relates to invoices raised for multiple terms education.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**15. Statement of funds**

**Statement of funds - current year**

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2024 £000
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
<b>Designated funds</b>						
Designated Funds	2,374	(253)	(153)	3	-	1,971
<b>General funds</b>						
General Funds - all funds	28,606	175,778	(157,664)	-	5	46,725
Pension reserve	(809)	-	146	-	(127)	(790)
	<u>27,797</u>	<u>175,778</u>	<u>(157,518)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(122)</u>	<u>45,935</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>30,171</u>	<u>175,525</u>	<u>(157,671)</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>(122)</u>	<u>47,906</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>						
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	707	440	(3)	(3)	11	1,152
	<u>2,436</u>	<u>440</u>	<u>(3)</u>	<u>(3)</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>2,881</u>
<b>Total of funds</b>	<u><u>32,607</u></u>	<u><u>175,965</u></u>	<u><u>(157,674)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>(111)</u></u>	<u><u>50,787</u></u>

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**15. Statement of funds (continued)**

Designated funds are accumulated surpluses from prior years available for use by the School that generated the funds. In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the Charitable Company transferred £4 million of general funds to designated funds during 2020 to be used in support of those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic. The fund continues to be used to support families who face financial hardship.

The Sponsorship fund has been formed to gather together the external donations received towards the Charitable Company's support for the academies of United Learning Trust.

Other donated funds include a number of individual donations towards specific building and other projects within the Group.

The transfer from other donated funds to designated funds represents a change in the classification of funds available for the benefit of the Godolphin school.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**15. Statement of funds (continued)**

**Statement of funds - prior year**

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2022 £000</i>	<i>Income £000</i>	<i>Expenditure £000</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £000</i>	<i>Gains/ (losses) £000</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2023 £000</i>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
<b>Designated funds</b>						
Designated Funds - all funds	2,659	(302)	13	4	-	2,374
<b>General funds</b>						
General Funds - all funds	24,556	144,456	(140,403)	(3)	-	28,606
Pension reserve	(1,125)	-	191	-	125	(809)
	<u>23,431</u>	<u>144,456</u>	<u>(140,212)</u>	<u>(3)</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>27,797</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>26,090</u>	<u>144,154</u>	<u>(140,199)</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>30,171</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>						
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	714	-	-	(1)	(6)	707
	<u>2,443</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(1)</u>	<u>(6)</u>	<u>2,436</u>
<b>Total of funds</b>	<u><u>28,533</u></u>	<u><u>144,154</u></u>	<u><u>(140,199)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>119</u></u>	<u><u>32,607</u></u>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**16. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current year**

	<b>Restricted funds 2024</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds 2024</b>	<b>Total funds 2024</b>
Tangible fixed assets	-	20,377	<b>20,377</b>
Intangible fixed assets	-	1,456	<b>1,456</b>
Fixed asset investments	440	251	<b>691</b>
Current assets	2,441	149,066	<b>151,507</b>
Creditors due within one year	-	(122,454)	<b>(122,454)</b>
Pension scheme liability	-	(790)	<b>(790)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,881</b>	<b>47,906</b>	<b>50,787</b>

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year**

	<i>Restricted funds 2023</i>	<i>Unrestricted funds 2023</i>	<i>Total funds 2023</i>
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,543	8,543
Intangible fixed assets	-	1,756	1,756
Fixed asset investments	-	210	210
Current assets	2,436	83,046	85,482
Creditors due within one year	-	(62,575)	(62,575)
Pension scheme liability	-	(809)	(809)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,436</b>	<b>30,171</b>	<b>32,607</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**17. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	<b>18,307</b>	<i>3,949</i>
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation and amortisation charges	<b>2,450</b>	<i>1,863</i>
Interest paid	<b>849</b>	<i>662</i>
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	<b>(131)</b>	<i>1</i>
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	<b>6,235</b>	<i>(6,037)</i>
Increase in creditors	<b>55,502</b>	<i>4,017</i>
Revaluation of fixed asset investments	<b>(16)</b>	<i>6</i>
Profit/(loss) on disposal of fixed assets	<b>4</b>	<i>(1)</i>
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	<b>(145)</b>	<i>(110)</i>
Funds transferred from other charities	<b>(9,100)</b>	<i>-</i>
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>73,955</b>	<i>4,350</i>

**18. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Cash in hand	<b>91,248</b>	<i>20,323</i>

**19. Analysis of changes in net debt**

	<b>At 1 September 2023</b>	<b>Cash flows</b>	<b>At 31 August 2024</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	<b>20,323</b>	<b>70,925</b>	<b>91,248</b>

**20. Contingent liabilities**

At 31 August 2024, the Charitable Company was party to cross-guarantees on bank loans and overdrafts of the parent undertaking totalling £10,000k (2023: £10,000k).

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**21. Capital commitments**

There were no capital commitments at 31 August 2024 or 31 August 2023.

**22. Acquired operations**

On 1 May 2024, United Church Schools Trust acquired the trade and certain assets and liabilities of the former The Godolphin School for £NIL consideration. The fair values at the acquisition date of each class of assets and liabilities were as follows:

	Book value £000	Fair value £000
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	6,888	11,164
Investments	464	464
	<u>7,352</u>	<u>11,628</u>
Current assets		
Debtors	1,204	1,204
Cash	642	642
	<u>1,846</u>	<u>1,846</u>
Creditors		
Creditors due within one year	(3,762)	(3,762)
Creditors due in more than one year	(612)	(612)
	<u>(4,374)</u>	<u>(4,374)</u>
<b>Total identifiable net assets</b>	<u><u>4,824</u></u>	<u><u>9,100</u></u>

The net assets acquired were held across unrestricted funds (£8,660k) and restricted funds (£440k).

The impact of acquired operations on the Statement of Financial Activities since acquisition is as follows:

	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£000</b>
Income from donations and legacies	148
Income from charitable activities	2,595
Expenditure on charitable activities	<u>(3,751)</u>
	<u><u>(1,008)</u></u>

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**23. Pension commitments**

The Charitable Company operates defined contribution schemes for the benefit of its employees. The assets of the schemes are managed and held externally on behalf of the scheme members in funds independent from those of the Charitable Company. Employer contributions payable to the schemes during the year amounted to £1.8m (2023: £1.5m). Employee and employer contributions payable to the schemes at the Balance Sheet date amounted to £0.2m (2023: £0.2m) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company operates two defined benefit pension scheme: the Teachers' Pension Scheme for England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff, and the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff of one school, which is managed by the Local Authority.

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 £1.5m were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2024 (2023: £1.2m) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company also has an unfunded defined benefit pension scheme which is provided for in the financial statements.

Provisions for unfunded pensions included within the total defined benefit pension scheme liability amounted to £0.8m (2023: £0.8m). The current service cost amounted to £NIL (2023: £NIL) and actuarial losses recognised through other comprehensive income amounted to £0.1m (2023: £0.2m). Benefits paid during the year amounted to £0.1m (2023: £0.1m).

The current mortality assumptions in respect of unfunded pensions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on the retirement age of 65 are between 19-21 years. The discount rate applied in calculating the obligation is 4.90%, with future pension increase and inflation being 2.70%.

**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. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment.

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

**Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme**

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2022. 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 and subsequent consultation are:

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

- 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.

The result of this valuation will be 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 £11.6m (2023: £10.0m).

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

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

**Local Government Pension Scheme**

The Charitable Company is one of several employing bodies included within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee administered funds. Contributions to the scheme are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of triennial valuations using the projected unit method.

The total employer's contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £49k (2023: £55k). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 21.4 - 22.0 per cent for employers and 5.5 - 12.5 per cent for employees.

**Ruling on amendment of Contracted out Salary Related pension schemes**

The Virgin Media Ltd v NTL Pension Trustees II decision, handed down by the High Court 16 June 2023, considered the implications for section 37 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993. In a judgement delivered July 2024, the Court of Appeal unanimously upheld the decision of the High Court and the impact of the decision is likely to be that schemes who made amendments without getting the required certification from the actuary will have additional liabilities. This consequently impacts the financial statements (defined benefit pension obligation) of the sponsoring employer. There are plans in place by the Government Actuarial Department to review the potential implications, but at the current time it is not possible to estimate the potential impact, if any, on the Schemes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Balance sheet date (expressed as weighted averages):

	<b>At 31 August 2024</b>	<i>At 31 August 2023</i>
	%	%
Discount rate	<b>4.90</b>	5.40
Future salary increases	<b>4.10</b>	4.30
Future pension increases	<b>2.70</b>	2.90
Inflation assumption	<b>2.60</b>	2.80
	<b>At 31 August 2024</b>	<i>At 31 August 2023</i>
Mortality rates (in years)		
- for a male aged 65 now	<b>21.0</b>	21.0
- at 65 for a male aged 45 now	<b>22.2</b>	22.2
- for a female aged 65 now	<b>23.5</b>	23.4
- at 65 for a female aged 45 now	<b>25.3</b>	25.2

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

	<b>At 31 August 2024</b>	<i>At 31 August 2023</i>
	£000	£000
Equities	<b>4,397</b>	4,213
Other bonds	<b>9</b>	-
Government bonds	<b>9</b>	35
Property	<b>784</b>	827
Cash	<b>129</b>	52
Other	<b>3,890</b>	3,577
<b>Total market value of LGPS assets</b>	<b>9,218</b>	<i>8,704</i>

The actual return on scheme assets was £644k (2023: (£80k)).

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities are as follows (for both the LGPS and unfunded pension scheme):

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Current service cost	(37)	(64)
Interest cost	(309)	(300)
Interest income	467	381
Interest on the effect of the asset ceiling	(157)	-
Administrative expenses	(2)	(2)
<b>Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities</b>	<b>(38)</b>	<i>15</i>

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

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening defined benefit obligation	6,608	8,212
Current service cost	37	64
Interest cost	309	300
Contributions by scheme participants	13	19
Benefits paid - LGPS	(190)	(240)
Benefits paid - unfunded obligation	(135)	(121)
Actuarial losses/(gains)	310	(1,626)
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>6,952</b>	<i>6,608</i>

Movements in the fair value of the Company's share of scheme assets were as follows:

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening fair value of scheme assets	8,704	8,952
Interest on assets	467	381
Actual return less interest	177	(461)
Contributions by employer	49	55
Contributions by scheme participants	13	19
Benefits paid	(190)	(240)
Administration expenses	(2)	(2)
<b>Closing fair value of scheme assets</b>	<b>9,218</b>	<i>8,704</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

The Charitable Company expects to contribute £49k to the LGPS in 2024.

Amounts for the current and previous period are as follows:

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Defined benefit pension schemes</b>		
Defined benefit obligations (including unfunded pension deficit)	<b>(6,952)</b>	<i>(6,608)</i>
LGPS assets	<b>9,218</b>	<i>8,704</i>
Unrecognised asset	<b>(3,056)</b>	<i>(2,905)</i>
<b>Net deficit</b>	<b>(790)</b>	<i>(809)</i>
Experience adjustments on LGPS and unfunded liabilities	<b>(310)</b>	<i>1,626</i>
Experience adjustments on LGPS assets	<b>177</b>	<i>(461)</i>
	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Unfunded pension scheme liability	<b>(790)</b>	<i>(809)</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(790)</b>	<i>(809)</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**24. Operating lease commitments**

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

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Land and buildings</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>327</b>	<i>327</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>827</b>	<i>981</i>
After more than 5 years	<b>1,238</b>	<i>1,410</i>
	<b>2,392</b>	<i>2,718</i>

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Other</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>1,344</b>	<i>1,280</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>1,428</b>	<i>1,878</i>
After more than 5 years	<b>87</b>	<i>98</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,859</b>	<i>3,256</i>

**25. Directors' indemnities**

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Charitable Company has purchased insurance to protect Directors and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on school business. The insurance provides cover up to £2,000,000 on any one claim and the cost for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £NIL (2023: £NIL). The cost of this insurance is included in the total insurance cost.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**26. Related party transactions**

United Learning Ltd is the sole member of United Church School Trust (UCST).

During the year, United Learning Ltd charged interest totalling £847k (2023: £743k) and rent totalling £3.1m (2023: £2.2m) to the Charitable Company.

UCST is the sole member of United Learning Trust (ULT).

The Charitable Company provided central services to ULT. The total amount charged during the year totalled £16.2m (2023: £13.8m) and was computed so as to equal the actual costs incurred on a per pupil basis.

At the year end date, balances amounting to £22.5m (2023: £25.8m) were due to the Charitable Company, and balances amounting to £6k (2023: £6k) were due from the Charitable Company to other entities in the Charitable Group of which United Learning Ltd is the ultimate parent. These balances arise as a result of direct recharges of costs where resources are centrally procured, with the underlying transactions not therefore representing related party transactions.

Brake Bros Ltd - a company in which a Trustee of both United Learning Ltd and ULT is Chief Financial Officer. The Charitable Company purchased products from Brake Bros Ltd totalling £5,317 during the period for cash consideration. £160 was due from Brake Bros Ltd at 31 August 2024. The Charitable Company made the purchases at arms' length in accordance with its financial regulations, which the Trustee neither participated in, nor influenced.

There have been no other transactions with related parties that require disclosure under either FRS 102 or Charities SORP (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

**27. Ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party**

The Board considers that the ultimate and immediate parent undertaking of the Charitable Company is United Learning Ltd (Company number: 00018582) by virtue of the fact that it is the sole member and therefore has the ability to appoint or remove trustees. The principal objects of United Learning Ltd are the same as those of the Charitable Company.

In the opinion of the Directors, there is no ultimate controlling party.

The largest group of undertakings for which group accounts have been drawn up is that headed by United Learning Ltd. Copies of the group accounts can be obtained from Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, PE3 6SB.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**28. Financial instruments**

	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
<b>Financial assets</b>		
Financial assets measured at fair value	<b>691</b>	<i>210</i>
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	<b>147,135</b>	<i>82,632</i>
	<b>147,826</b>	<i>82,842</i>
	<b>147,826</b>	<i>82,842</i>
	<b>2024</b>	<i>2023</i>
<b>Financial liabilities</b>		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	<b>17,956</b>	<i>16,979</i>
	<b>17,956</b>	<i>16,979</i>
	<b>17,956</b>	<i>16,979</i>

**United Church Schools Trust**

England & Wales - Charity number 1016538

---

# Accounts

---

Registered number: 02780748  
Charity number: 1016538

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

---

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

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**CONTENTS**

---

	Page
<b>Reference and administrative details of the Company, its Trustees and advisers</b>	1 - 2
<b>Trustees' report</b>	3 - 23
<b>Independent auditor's report on the financial statements</b>	24 - 28
<b>Statement of financial activities</b>	29
<b>Balance sheet</b>	30 - 31
<b>Statement of cash flows</b>	32
<b>Notes to the financial statements</b>	33 - 63

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

---

**Trustees**                      The Very Rev. Dr John Hall (resigned 22 May 2023)  
Mrs Melissa Geiger (appointed 1 January 2023)  
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson, Chair  
Mr Ben Gordon  
Mr Richard Greenhalgh  
Mr Will Hagger (appointed 2 December 2022, resigned 13 January 2023)  
Dame Reena Keeble (appointed 1 December 2022)  
Mr Mike Litchfield (resigned 21 November 2022)

Biographies for Trustees can be found at [www.unitedlearning.org.uk](http://www.unitedlearning.org.uk)

**Company registered  
number**                      02780748

**Charity registered  
number**                      1016538

**Registered office**              Worldwide House  
Thorpe Wood  
Peterborough  
PE3 6SB

**Company secretary**              Mrs Alison Hussain

**Chief executive officer**              Sir Jon Coles

**Senior management  
team**                              Sir Jon Coles, Chief Executive Officer  
Mr Benjamin Antell, Director of Secondary Education  
Mrs Fiona Boulton, Director of Independent Schools  
Mrs Kate Bradley, Director of HR  
Mr Darran Ellison-Lee, Director of Primary Education  
Mrs Suzanne Howard, Director of Professional Development  
Mrs Louise Johnston, Chief Financial Officer  
Ms Anna Paige, Director of Strategy and Performance  
Ms Lauren Thorpe, Chief Transformation Officer

**Independent auditor**              Grant Thornton UK LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
17th Floor  
103 Colmore Row  
Birmingham  
B3 3AG

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**  
**(CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

---

**Bankers** Barclays Bank PLC  
One Snowhill  
Snowhill Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6GN

**Solicitors** HCR Hewitsons LLP  
Elgin House  
Billing Road  
Northampton  
NN1 5BA

Stone King LLP  
3rd Floor  
Bateman House  
82-88 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB2 1LQ

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

---

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) (the Charitable Company) for the year ended 31 August 2023. The Trustees confirm that the Trustees' Report and financial statements of the Charitable Company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Charitable Company's governing document and the provisions of 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) ("SORP 2019").

### **Constitution and objects**

United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) is registered with the Charity Commission (No. 1016538) and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales), governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended in 2004. The Charitable Company is established for charitable purposes and in accordance with its Memorandum of Association its principal activity is to provide a liberal, practical and general education for children which includes religious instruction in the doctrine and duties of Christianity.

### **Members of the Board (hereafter called "Trustees")**

The present membership of the Board is set out under Reference and Administrative Details. All Trustees served throughout the year except where indicated.

Each member of the Board of Trustees holds one share in United Learning Ltd (formerly United Church Schools Foundation Ltd ("ULL")), the ultimate parent undertaking.

### **Appointment of Trustees**

The Board has the power to appoint any person as an additional Trustee or to fill a casual vacancy. A Trustee holds office for three years, after which they must resign. They may remain in office for a further three years with the consent of the Board. Following this, they shall be eligible for re-election annually upon the proposal of the Chair.

The training and induction provided for new Trustees is dependent upon their existing experience. Where necessary, induction will provide training on charity, educational, legal and financial matters. All new Trustees are given tours of the Charitable Company's schools and the chance to meet with staff and students. They are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role as Trustees. Induction is tailored specifically to the individual. The Company Secretary works with the Trustees to identify training needs and steps to keep the Trustees updated regarding the regulatory environment.

## **Strategic report**

### **Strategies and activities**

The principal object of the Charitable Company is set out above.

Founded in 1883 as an educational charity anchored in the Church of England, the Charitable Company manages the operation of a group of Independent Schools to provide education for students of different abilities between the ages of 0 and 18. Its admission policies welcome people from all employment, faiths and backgrounds. In 2001, it created a subsidiary charity, United Learning Trust ("ULT") a multi-academy trust, to extend its work into some of the most challenging inner-city areas through the City Academy programme, and to this day the Charitable Company remains the sponsor of ULT.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

### **About United Learning**

The overall aim of the Charitable Group is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools which enable all young people to make a success of their lives. The roots of our charity can be traced back nearly 140 years, and over this period, we have founded and developed a large number of schools, focused on the most important social and educational challenges of the day. Our strength as a group of schools lies in the unique collaboration between the state and independent sectors, in our national reach and growing regional clusters and in our dedication to continuous improvement, to developing each pupil's whole character and our pursuit of excellence. Our track record in some of the country's most challenging schools is based on structures and systems which ensure high expectations, rigour, enthusiasm and breadth.

As of 31 August 2023, United Learning – the trading name of the Charitable Group – comprises 13 independent schools operated within United Church Schools Trust ("UCST"), 81 state sector academies operated within ULT and a central office function that serves all our schools.

### **Operating review**

#### **Framework for Excellence**

Our 'Framework for Excellence' is at the heart of everything we do at United Learning. It sets out the five key principles that we believe are vital to an excellent education for children and young people.

#### **Best From Everyone**

Our aim is to bring out the best in everyone. So we must expect the best from everyone, all the time. Every child is a special individual, capable of extraordinary things. Who can know the limits of any child's potential? So, we expect unreasonably - we constantly challenge children to do what they think they can't, to persist, to work hard and to be at their best.

From every adult we expect the same: that they are at their best, expect unreasonably of themselves, are determined and resilient and pass those expectations on to the children in all they do. We act with the utmost love, care and good faith - the highest standards come with the greatest attention to the wellbeing of all.

#### **Powerful Knowledge**

Our most important purpose is to teach young people things they would not learn outside school, which free them to think and act more powerfully in their lives. Words and numbers are our most powerful ways of representing the world. Mastery of language and fluent mathematical skills are therefore our priority. We aim to prepare young people to make a success of their lives: a core entitlement to subject-based learning; the development of talents; an understanding of work and society.

Worthwhile learning is often hard. Inspiring teaching is what gives access to difficult concepts and the thrill of intellectual discovery. Powerful knowledge is not static or backward-looking. It includes the ability to critique, challenge the status quo, think and learn.

#### **Education with Character**

Academic success is very important. Exam passes are an important aspect of that. But there is more to a good education. Our schools also aim to develop character, compassion and service. Young people are expected to contribute to their school and to society; to try things which they think they cannot do; to persist in the face of difficulty; to become resilient in overcoming obstacles; to manage themselves; to work independently on things which challenge them; to work with others and in teams; to be courageous and caring; to lead.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

We want young people to look back on a joyful schooling which has inspired and challenged them, given them wide opportunity and prepared them for the ups and downs of life.

### **Leadership in Every Role**

Our children are leaders of the future. We expect them to start today - taking advantage of structured opportunities to lead and taking responsibility for themselves and others. Every adult in the school is a leader. In every word, tone and gesture, they set direction and expectation. We expect every adult to take responsibility to do what is right for the children.

All those in formal leadership positions create the climate in which others work. They demand the highest standards, build a performance culture, develop their teams and create the space for others to lead. All leaders listen, grow relationships, act with integrity and care and expect the best from themselves and others in building a happy, confident school.

### **Continuous Improvement**

However good we are, we can be better. We constantly look for improvements and implement them with pace. We look for ideas for improvement inside the organisation and out; we observe one another; we steal good ideas with pride and look to make them better; we work together to improve.

We always look at the evidence and are rigorous in evaluating impact. We stop or change things which aren't working; we improve things which are. We aim for high leverage: high impact for low effort and low cost. We constantly look to have more impact for less cost and effort and to spend every pound wisely.

### **Long-term strategy**

We continue to follow our five-year 2021-2026 strategy. We have agreed the following four strategic aims for this period:

- Great places to learn – because of the educational quality of our schools, their development of the whole person and the preparation they offer for life, the pastoral care they offer and the quality of the environment and relationships.
- Great places to work – because our schools offer an excellent professional experience, high quality relationships with students and other colleagues, excellent professional growth and opportunities, and a high quality working environment and resources.
- A great group to join – because of the quality of support we offer schools with compliance, the 'back office', education and school improvement and the high quality collaboration between schools.
- A great contribution beyond the group – because United Learning has a commitment to local communities, the national education system and the wider world.

Each strategic aim is supported by detailed delivery plans which enable us to ensure adequate human and financial resources are available to achieve the aims over the strategy period. The Charitable Company has a number of performance indicators against which it assesses its success and progress in delivering this strategy. The key indicators are:

1. All schools to improve their academic performance within the year.
2. All schools to improve pupil attendance within the year and to reduce incidences of suspension and exclusion.
3. All schools to recruit and retain high quality staff, including high quality trainee teachers.
4. All staff to receive high quality professional development.
5. To achieve it's in year budget.
6. To deliver an impact beyond our schools, including through community hubs and reducing carbon emissions.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

Progress against our key indicators is set out below.

### **Academic Performance**

#### **GCSE**

At GCSE, across our independent schools:

- 61% of entries were awarded at least a grade 7.
- 89% of entries were awarded at least a grade 5.
- 96% of entries were awarded at least a grade 4.

Notable performances included:

- **Guildford High School** where 97% of entries achieved a grade 7 or above.
- **Surbiton High School** where 88% of entries achieved a grade 7 or above.

#### **A Level**

Across the nine secondary independent schools, there were 491 pupils entered for A Level entries. Headline results are:

- 50% of entries achieved A\*-A grades.
- 75% of entries achieved A\*-B grades.
- 90% of entries achieved A\*-C grades.

Notable performances included:

- **Guildford High School** where 85% of entries achieved at least A\* - A grades.
- **Surbiton High School** where 64% of entries achieved at least A\* - A grades.

During the year eight of the Charitable Group's independent schools (Coworth Flexlands School, St Ives School, AKS, Embley School, Surbiton High School, The Royal School, Tranby and Lincoln Minster School) were inspected by ISI. All were judged to be compliant. Where a full inspection took place, all received 'excellent' judgements.

#### **Education with Character in Action**

Schools delivered extensive enrichment and extracurricular programmes to broaden our students' horizons and introduce them to new experiences. These included a number of Group-wide events and initiatives such as the annual International Art Competition, the StorySLAM creative writing competition, Student Leadership Programme and MUSICFest.

#### **Annual Surveys**

Each year we carry out pupil, parent and staff surveys.

Our annual surveys for pupils, parents and staff provide robust feedback on our progress towards our goals. They enable us to identify schools in need of support, and schools able to provide it. We encourage a 'you said – we did' strategy allowing any staff, parent, or pupil survey to maximise benefit and bring about positive change.

Headline findings from our Pupil Surveys across the Charitable Company's schools conducted in November 2022 include:

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

At Prep:

- 98% of pupils agreed that they were proud of their school.
- 95% of pupils agreed that they feel that they belong in their school.
- 97% of pupils said they believed they could be successful in school and in life.

At Secondary:

- 95% of pupils agreed that the adults in their school expect them to be successful.
- 89% of pupils said they were proud of their school.
- 88% of pupils said they felt that they belonged to their school.

### **Successful Staff Engagement**

To determine staff attitudes towards the Group, we carried out our annual staff survey in Autumn 2022. The overall 'engagement' score rose to 80%, well above relevant benchmarks.

Key findings of our staff survey include:

- 88% of staff said they valued their school's culture.
- 86% of staff said they support their school's strategy and direction.
- 84% said their job gives them a sense of personal fulfilment.

### **Leadership**

United Learning remains committed to professional development and to ensuring that its schools are Great Places to Work. Investment in staff development supports individuals to have a greater impact on young people's learning and achievement; it also ensures that staff are well prepared to progress into new roles through internal promotion.

In 2022-23, the United Learning internal Leadership Development Programmes ("LDPs") were once again delivered with great success. One external participant voiced the view of many in saying: "The course was exceptionally well-designed... The insightful sessions... compelled me to share them with colleagues in my own professional setting. This course highlighted the exemplary practices undertaken by United Learning in schools nationwide."

All LDPs are facilitated by United Learning school and central office leaders. They are research-informed, flexible, webinar-based courses whose curricula support talented aspiring and recently appointed leaders to improve their personal effectiveness and refine their leadership values and behaviours.

In all, 92 staff completed the Middle Leadership Programme, 72 completed the Senior Leadership Programme and 15 completed the Aspiring to Headship Programme.

The reformed NPQ programmes were delivered in partnership with Ambition Institute. In 2022-23, 186 United Learning staff successfully completed an NPQ and our Teaching School Hubs supported an additional 210 external candidates through one of the nine programmes. The average pass rate was 98% which exceeded the national target of 90%, with 93.9% of participants reporting that they would recommend the programmes to colleagues.

### **United Teaching**

In the year, 168 trainees completed United Learning's initial teacher training scheme, United Teaching. All trainees successfully 'passed' and were recommended for Qualified Teaching Status. As we approach the 2023/24 academic year, a further 235 trainee teachers have been recruited and participated in our Summer Institutes in July and August.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

In January 2023, United Teaching was judged to be an Outstanding teacher training provider by Ofsted. The inspectors reported that United Teaching “offers the highest quality of education and training”, with trainees “exceptionally well prepared for the rewards and challenges of the teaching profession”.

### **Early Careers Teachers (“ECT”)**

Support of ECT staff continues to be strong with 90% of early career teachers and mentors engaging well with the programme; retention of year 1 ECTs into year 2 has remained consistently high. All ECT mentors were offered training in instructional coaching which contributed not only to their professional development but to the overall experience for ECT staff. Further to this, a common independent school programme for ECTs was established, with great feedback from participants and induction coordinators alike.

### **Apprenticeships**

United Learning Apprenticeships deliver apprenticeships for both support staff and teachers, with courses tailored for colleagues working in the education sector. Our provider delivers three Level 3 courses: Teaching Assistant, Early Years Educator and HR Support. Our Level 6 Teacher apprenticeship (delivered via United Teaching) also launched in September 2021.

In October 2022, 39 apprentices were studying a Level 3 apprenticeship: 23 as teaching assistants, 9 as early years educators and 7 as human resources support staff. An additional 155 apprentices were enrolled to study Level 6 teaching apprenticeships.

Key measures of success indicate high levels of learner engagement and 90% of apprentices expressed satisfaction with the programme and support they received. As a result, apprentice retention rates remain high.

In October 2022 Ofsted carried out a first monitoring visit following the establishment of United Learning Apprenticeships. The apprenticeship provider was found to be making reasonable progress in all areas.

In the year the United Learning professional development offer grew to include a new School Business Manager (“SBM”) programme. This programme supported 23 SBMs to develop in their current roles and provided invaluable opportunities for networking between colleagues in comparable roles across United Learning. In all, more than 80% of enrolled participants engaged with the complete programme and 100% of participants agreed that the programme helped to develop their knowledge of leading support services across a school.

### **Inclusion, Diversity and Equality**

To meet our aim for all our schools to be great places to work, we have a commitment to inclusion and fairness; we encourage all our staff to aspire, learn, progress and succeed in their career and ensure they are rewarded for doing so. This year, the Group continued to build on its work on inclusion, through:

- Establishing Future Leaders’ Networks for female teachers and ethnic minority teachers who aspire to progress into a leadership role.
- Continuing with our Reverse Mentoring scheme.
- Improving the quality of workforce data and producing a detailed analysis of a range of HR practices including, for example, the percentage of internal promotion by gender and ethnic origin.

Our median Gender Pay Gap decreased from 11.2% in 2022 to 10.1% in 2023 (below the national education sector pay gap of 25%). We have also assessed our Ethnicity Pay Gap in 2023 and calculated a 24.8% median and 18.4% mean gap in our independent schools. We have continued to take steps to improve the racial diversity of our staffing profile so that it becomes more representative of the communities we serve – particularly at more senior levels. At the end of August 2023, 3.9% of our senior leaders and 1% of our middle leaders were from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared to 6.7% of our staff as a whole.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

### **Our Group of Schools**

Our schools remained consistent throughout the year with no schools joining the group during this period.

### **Going Concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, including full consideration of the impact of the current economic and political climate, the Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The financial results of the Charitable Company for the year were underpinned by strong pupil numbers, and whilst pay inflation impacted trading results, strong cash reserves were maintained. The current year also started positively with strong pupil numbers ahead of budget. However, again continuing cost inflation has led to higher implemented pay awards than originally budgeted which reduce the expected operating surplus. The Charitable Company is nevertheless in a strong position and able to absorb this level of surplus reduction for the year, but a full review continues to identify efficiencies and savings to be made in order to improve surplus margins. Various cash flow scenarios have been modelled for the period to 28 February 2025. The worst-case scenario uses pessimistic assumptions including potential pupil number reductions resulting from high costs of living, and the model builds in higher levels of inflation and increased costs. However, even in this scenario the Charitable Company continues to have adequate cash reserves to meet its liabilities as they fall due during the forecast period. In preparing these forecasts, management have considered the different levers available to them, such as operating costs savings and the timing of capital expenditure, which can improve working capital at the lower points in the headroom available, notwithstanding that these remain positive throughout. The Charitable Company also has available to it a wide range of contingency measures which it could use to reduce costs and/or realise funds should that prove necessary.

Bank loans of the parent undertaking, to which the Charitable Company is party to cross-guarantees, were renewed in March 2023, and will now mature in March 2026 at the earliest. The Charitable Company's bank rolling credit facility ends in February 2025 and renewal options are under review, the base case and worst case are not reliant on renewal of this facility. Management have also considered the impact of the base and worst-case scenarios on debt covenants and concluded that these will not be breached. The headroom in the different cash flow models and the levers available to the Charitable Company have enabled management to conclude that there is no material uncertainty in management's going concern assessment.

Therefore, based on the current financial position and latest forecasts, the robustness of cash flow management and the level of financial reserves available in the cash flow scenarios, the Board of Trustees are confident that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future, being at least twelve months from the date of approval of these financial statements. 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 Accounting Policies.

### **Financial Review**

The total surplus for the year amounted to £4,074k (2022: £7,465k). Included within these results was an actuarial gain on defined benefit pension schemes and other pension commitments of £125k (2022: £1,065k).

The schools operated by the Charitable Company during the year were as follows:

AKS  
Ashford School  
Banstead Preparatory School  
Coworth Flexlands School  
Dunottar School  
Embley

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

Guildford High School  
Lincoln Minster School  
Rowan Preparatory School  
St. Ives (Haslemere)  
Surbiton High School  
The Royal School  
Tranby

The Charitable Company is a sponsor of ULT which is a subsidiary undertaking of the Charitable Company. ULT's aim is to found and manage academies under the government initiative. Academies opened to date are listed on the United Learning website.

### **Funds**

The value of restricted funds to be utilised in future years includes £707k (2022: £714k) for prize and scholarship funds and other donated funds and £1,729k (2022: £1,729k) for the sponsorship fund. Unrestricted funds amount to £30,171k (2022: £26,090k) including designated funds of £2,374k (2022: £2,659k). The assets are held in pursuance of the Charitable Company's objectives.

### **Plans for future periods**

The Charitable Company aims to continue to increase the number of pupils educated at its schools. This will be through organic growth and through mergers with other schools. The Charitable Company will continue to strive to improve the levels of performance of its students at all levels and will continue its efforts to ensure its prep students are well prepared for their secondary education and its secondary students are able to obtain jobs or a place in higher education, as they choose, once they leave its schools.

### **Funding**

The Trustees are satisfied that the Charitable Company's assets attributable to each of its individual funds are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in relation to those funds.

### **Principal risks and uncertainties**

During the year under review, the Trustees and senior management have formally identified, and documented, the major risks to which the Charitable Company is exposed.

Those risks have been reviewed by the Risk and Audit Committee and risk management strategies have been implemented. Risk management is embedded in the day to day processes of the Charitable Company and its subsidiaries. Principal risk areas for the Charitable Company are the protection of pupils and employees, and of assets and data. Procedures and governance to minimise these risks are constantly being reviewed and updated.

The Charitable Company's strategic risk register also covers risks relating to data protection, occupational health and safety, procurement, fraud, increasing cost of living, major incidents, growth, school performance and business continuity. Over the course of the year, the Charitable Company has amended its assessment of risk to reflect: the impact of the rising cost of living on its staff, families and communities; the potential for poor mental health and wellbeing to impact pupil and staff engagement; effective management of our future growth strategy; and a broader interpretation of the risks relating to governance.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

The principal risks include:

**Safeguarding**

To ensure that pupils are safe, feel safe, and are fully supported in this respect by their school, and to reduce the likelihood of child protection issues the Charitable Company has Safeguarding and Child Protection policies in place. These policies, which are available online, also provide a framework for its schools to develop secure processes for identifying and supporting pupils at risk of abuse. The implementation and effectiveness of these policies and procedures, which adhere to Department for Education guidelines on safeguarding and child protection, are regularly monitored and reviewed.

**Information Security**

In order to reduce the likelihood of data breaches and loss of access, the Charitable Company has Information Security policies in place, supported by regular training (including at induction and annual refreshers) and guidance for staff. Specific software, practices and processes are mandated across all the Charitable Company's schools to reduce opportunities for security breaches and mitigate the impact of any loss. The implementation and effectiveness of the approach are regularly monitored and reviewed, including through periodic stress testing.

**People**

The Charitable Company depends on the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers and support staff to achieve its objectives, but currently operates in a challenging recruitment market. To mitigate this risk the Charitable Company's pay agreements for all staff are competitive within the sector (recognising current increased cost pressures), United Teaching is increasingly delivering a supply of quality teachers, and the Group-wide recruitment and retention handbook includes policies and advice for schools, including in relation to promoting diversity and inclusion. The Charitable Company invests in the development of its staff, including through provision of bespoke leadership development programmes and apprenticeship programmes for support staff, delivered through our own training provider.

**Financial pressures**

The Charitable Company is reliant upon the parents paying its school fees promptly and an economic downturn could have a direct impact on parents' ability to pay their fees. The political landscape is currently uncertain, government instability, a potential recession and possible changes in VAT and business rate relief rules could have a significant impact on the cost base of the Charitable Company's schools. Senior management and the Trustees therefore aim to keep abreast of the economic conditions both in the UK and abroad. Overheads are carefully monitored to ensure that resources are used effectively.

The markets in which the Charitable Company's schools operate are highly competitive. Consequently, the schools constantly review their processes to ensure that their pupils receive a first-class education that helps them to perform to their full ability in all aspects of school life.

A large proportion of the Charitable Company's costs relate to staff salaries, which are relatively fixed each year. There is a risk that a significant drop in revenue or further pay inflation or increases in pension contributions may lead to an inability to cover such costs.

To mitigate these financial risks senior management closely monitor all costs, including increased pension contributions, against budgets on a monthly basis. Variance analysis is undertaken to consider the impact of varying income and costs when budgets are being prepared and through monthly management accounts and reforecasts, and action plans are prepared and implemented to address any adverse impacts.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

## **Pensions**

The Charitable Company also belongs to the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS") run by the relevant Local Authority for certain nonteaching staff. This is now a closed scheme relating to one school where employees transferred as part of the conversion from a maintained school. Under the application of FRS 102, the contributions made by the Charitable Company to these funded defined benefit schemes currently results in pension deficits recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities. Under FRS 102, the Charitable Company is required to account for the retirement benefits when it is committed to provide them, even if the actual provision will be many years into the future. Whilst FRS 102 may be seen as a better reflection of the obligations of the employer to fund pension promises to employees, it does not reflect the actual accounting arrangements of the Pension Fund. It requires the Charitable Company to recognise the total value of all pension obligations that have accumulated (including deferred pensions) at 31 August each year.

A better reflection of a pension fund's actual position comes from the more detailed triennial assessment made by the fund actuary. This assesses and examines the ongoing financial position of the Pension Fund. The actuarial valuation can differ considerably from the FRS 102 valuation. It is the triennial actual valuation that is used to review contribution rates to the Fund from the Charitable Company, to ensure that existing assets and future contributions will be sufficient to meet future pension payments, and thus creates a risk in terms of increased contribution rates.

With regards to the LGPS risk senior management review the accounting reports prepared annually by the respective schemes' actuaries.

## **Financial risk management objectives and policies**

The Charitable Company uses various financial instruments including cash and various items such as trade debtors and trade creditors that arise directly from its operations. The main purpose of these financial instruments is to raise finance for the Charitable Company's operations.

The main risks arising from the Charitable Company's financial instruments are liquidity risk and interest rate risk.

Financial risk management is managed by the central office finance department who act as the Charitable Company's treasury function ensuring that surplus funds are deposited to maximise interest receivable. In addition, it uses the Charitable Company's facilities in the most efficient manner. Those facilities are designed to ensure that the Charitable Company has sufficient available funds for day-to-day operations and for planned expansion and capital expenditure. The Charitable Company seeks to manage financial risk by ensuring sufficient liquidity is available to meet foreseeable needs and to invest cash assets safely and profitably. Short term flexibility is achieved by overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company finances its operations through retained surpluses and overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company is exposed to price risk in terms of fees but is content that these are in line with those in the sector, and budgets accordingly. The principal credit risk for the Charitable Company arises from its debtors. Payment terms are enforced by the Charitable Company's credit control department and debt collection is outsourced as necessary. Credit risk is further managed through regular contact with any families in financial difficulty in an effort to assist.

Liquidity and cash flow risks are managed through the appropriate and carefully managed use of financial instruments with our principal bankers.

## **Policies**

As part of managing our risks and to ensure good governance we outline some key policies below.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

### **Reserves**

The Charitable Company's reserves policy is to maintain unrestricted reserves at a level to support the Company's strategic five-year goals and to cover any unforeseen circumstances including those covered by the Trust's risk management processes. To achieve this each school is set an in year budget target which ensures adequate resources including for estates and digital infrastructure investment as per their individual five-year plans.

Total reserves as at 31 August 2023 are £32,607k (2022: £28,533k) made up of retained restricted and unrestricted funds, comprising unrestricted general funds of £28,606k (2022: £24,556k), unrestricted designated funds of £2,374k (2022: £2,659k), an unrestricted pension fund deficit of £809k (2022: deficit of £1,125k) and restricted funds of £2,436k (2022: £2,443k). Retained restricted and unrestricted reserves increased during the year due to well managed budgeting and financial controls ensuring the aims of the Charitable Company were met.

The Directors plan to use reserves during the financial year to 31 August 2024 to invest in school buildings and IT infrastructure, and to fund strategic initiatives such as pupil mental health counselling support. Directors consider the current level of reserves, taking into consideration this planned expenditure, to be appropriate and in line with this policy.

The purpose of the restricted funds is set out in Note 16.

### **Investment policy**

The Charitable Company's cash reserves are used to set off against borrowings in other independent schools Group companies to minimise interest charges to the independent schools Group. Cash balances are invested with Barclays Bank. During the year the investment strategy produced returns in line with the Charitable Company's expectations and market rates.

### **Environmental policy**

The Charitable Group recognises that good environmental management must be an integral and fundamental part of its corporate business strategy and good educational practice. The Charitable Group therefore aims to ensure that its work is sustainable and seeks to avoid negative impact on the environment and climate. It is committed to reducing the carbon emissions associated with its operations, towards a goal of carbon neutral.

The Charitable Group seeks to engage all members of the school community in developing a sustainable approach to their work and activities so as to help it achieve its aims. The Charitable Group's commitment includes the environmentally prudent management of its buildings and operations, collaboration with suppliers to improve its indirect environmental impacts, and environmental programmes and education for its employees and pupils.

The Charitable Group has set a target to remove 50,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e a year by 2029/30. Key activities and initiatives include:

- Putting decarbonisation plans in place across all schools: these are informed by the surveys that were carried out by external consultants during 2023; we will ensure surveys are carried out in any new schools joining the Group;
- Implementing zero carbon heating solutions in five schools during 2023/24, with grants from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme together with £6m match-funding;
- Continuing with a programme to improve the school Estate, including the replacement of old and inefficient gas boilers, improving insulation and installing LED lighting. In 2022/23 the Group's schools received £2.4m in energy efficiency grants, which have been used to support this work;
- Reviewing all photo-voltaic installations across the Group, with the aim of establishing a more consistent

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

- approach, as well as identifying further opportunities for renewable energy generation;
- Establishing our approach to sustainable procurement as part of our Group procurement strategy, focusing initially on our largest suppliers and the areas of spend that are responsible for the highest emissions. Over time, we aim to make it a condition of doing business with the Charitable Group that suppliers are committed to reducing their own carbon emissions;
  
  - Maintaining a network of Carbon Neutral Champions across all our schools, who lead and champion action on sustainability in their school and work together to identify ways of further reducing carbon emissions.

**Pay policy for key management personnel**

Details of the pay policy in respect of key management personnel is included in the Governance section on pages 19 and 20.

**Employee involvement and employment of the disabled**

Employees have been consulted on issues of concern to them by means of regular consultative committee and staff meetings and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by management. Regular meetings are held with staff in our schools to brief them on major issues and discuss local issues. Each school also ensures that all staff are kept fully briefed through a variety of mechanisms, including staff meetings, notice boards, newsletters and the Group intranet United Hub.

All new staff joining the Charitable Company are fully inducted and annually the Charitable Company runs two induction programmes, lasting two days, for all teachers new to United Learning. The Charitable Company carries out exit interviews for all staff leaving the organisation and has adopted a procedure of upward feedback for senior management and the Directors.

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

- Equal opportunities policy
- Volunteers' policy
- Health & safety policy

The Charitable Company has in place a National Recognition Agreement with the main teaching and support unions. Regular joint meetings of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) are held with this Group where matters of mutual interest are discussed and agreed upon.

The union members of the JNC report back to their members through locally appointed representatives. Each school also ensures all staff are kept fully briefed by using a variety of methods including staff meetings and newsletters.

In accordance with the Charitable Company's Equal Opportunities policy, the Charitable Company has long established fair employment practices in the recruitment, selection, retention and training of disabled staff.

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

Details of the Charitable Group's Gender Pay report can be found on its website at [unitedlearning.org.uk](http://unitedlearning.org.uk)

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

### **Fundraising**

Our schools occasionally fundraise for themselves or charities via events such as performances, non-school uniform days and school fairs.

Occasionally, the Group is approached by trusts or individuals who are interested in working with us and we will provide them with programme and funding information in order to explore funding opportunities that meet both parties' objectives and ethos. In prior years, the Charitable Group has received large donations from individuals in this way.

We are members of the Fundraising Regulator Fundraising Preference Service to monitor our fundraising complaints. We did not receive any complaints this year.

### **Public benefit**

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit when reviewing the Charitable Company's aims and objectives and in planning future activities for the year.

The Charitable Company aims to educate as many young people as possible irrespective of their backgrounds. The main strands to its work are:

- Sponsorship of the ULT multi-academy trust.
- Bursaries and other financial assistance.
- Nurturing collaboration between schools and giving students and staff exceptional academic, sporting and cultural experiences.

The Charitable Group aims to make a great contribution beyond the group, having a positive impact on our local communities beyond the school, on the national education system and on the wider world.

Throughout the year staff across our Group, including Head teachers and members of our senior leadership team have provided support and expertise to working groups, research teams and national fora across the sector including in EdTech, curriculum reviews, qualification and exams.

### **Community Hubs**

In the year we introduced a framework to support schools to strengthen their relationships with, and make great contributions to, their local communities. This work included the development of five community hubs which provide tailored and targeted support to the communities they serve. This year our hubs:

- Delivered 914 hours of support to their communities.
- Facilitated 465 community activity sessions.
- Provided 341 hot meals to local residents.
- Received 737 volunteer hours from young people, parents and community members to support hub activity.

### **United Curriculum and Continuity Oak**

As part of our role and moral purpose to contribute towards the improvement of education generally across the country, we have made available our United Learning Curriculum to schools outside the Group. Schools can now have access to the Group's tried and tested curriculum and benchmarking analysis tools for end-of-year assessments.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

### **Academies**

The Charitable Company is the sponsor of, and works very closely with, ULT in managing a group of academies. Through interaction in all of the schools and academies, the two charitable companies work together to share best practice both ways, and to ensure they give pupils every opportunity to succeed during their education. This involves such activities as group meetings at every level to share best practice and the sharing of educational resources over United Hub.

### **Access policy**

The Charitable Company works very hard to offer education to as many pupils as possible throughout England. Through its bursary policy, it widens the number of pupils attending the Charitable Company's schools. By setting up, sponsoring, and working very closely with ULT, pupils in state funded academies enjoy the same educational resources available throughout the Charitable Company's schools. The Charitable Company's schools all access United Hub, which enables teachers at any of the schools in the Group to collaborate, share resources and challenges, positively impacting on workload.

### **Bursary Policy**

The ability to offer education to children of families who would not be able to afford the school fees is very important to the Charitable Company. As a result of the desire to help children in this way the Charitable Company continued to operate its schemes of means tested financial assistance and its separate schemes of scholarships and family discounts, where parents have more than one child at one of our schools. Means tested assistance is available to those who would not otherwise be able to afford the fees and, equally importantly, in cases of hardship where pupil's education or future prospects might be at risk. Bursaries range in value from 5% to 100% of the school fee. During the year, the Charitable Company granted £0.8m (2022: £0.8m) to pupils attending its schools under means tested assistance. This equated to 0.6% of gross fees received (2022: 0.7%). Further details of our Bursary Policy and how to apply are on our website.

In addition during the year, the Charitable Company granted £307k (2022: £326k) of further discounts and £4k (2022: £58k) of payment deferrals from the £4m Hardship Fund set up during lockdown to support those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

### **Section 172 Statement**

The Directors fulfil their duty to promote the success of the Charitable Company, under Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) and consider the interests of United Church Schools Trust's key stakeholders when making decisions as follows.

United Church Schools Trust has a clear purpose which is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools which enable all young people to make a success of their lives. This requires the Board, senior leadership team and other employees to maintain an approach to strategic, financial and operational decision making that is values based and sustainable in approach, and therefore aligned to the requirements and expectations of Section 172. Our long-term success relies upon our delivering the strategic objectives described in the Directors' report above through our talented and committed employees; close working relationships with regulators and suppliers, providing benefits to both the pupils in our schools and the wider school community.

In the light of our purpose and strategy as set out in the Directors' Report our Directors take steps to understand the needs and priorities of each stakeholder group and do so via a number of mediums, including by direct engagement through school visits and discussions with employees; employee, parent and pupil surveys; and via committees and forums. Day to day engagement and fostering of relationships with pupils and parents is delegated to school management. A range of tools are provided to assist with this, including our Parental Engagement Handbook.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

Strategic priorities are discussed with the Board at the start of each year. These are informed by our long-term vision, the outcomes for pupils and other key performance measures from the previous year and the outcomes of our stakeholder surveys. The Board sets key performance indicators and targets relating to these priorities and monitor performance against these at each Group Board meeting.

At Board meetings, the Directors receive reports summarising the current status of each of our schools and highlighting any notable successes or concerns. Sub-committees, as described in the Governance Statement, meet to enable scrutiny of a wider range of data and reports and to review progress against the strategic objectives.

The Board has designated named Directors to act as the key link between the Board and Local Governing Bodies, and with the education teams. There are two such designated Directors, one each for secondary and primary academies. The Board has also identified link Directors for safeguarding, people, health & safety, finance and risk management. Link Directors attend relevant meetings of the Executive and speak regularly with relevant key employees to provide regular oversight and ensure they understand the key issues facing the organisation and how these are being tackled.

All Directors are invited to visit schools on a regular basis. These visits are generally scheduled alongside education teams so that they are able to observe the way in which Education Directors engage with senior school staff in pursuing improvement priorities. Their notes of visits are shared with the Executive and with the Board.

United Church Schools Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission and has due regard to the Commission's guidance. The Trust is regulated by the Information Commissioner's Officer ("ICO"), and policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations, which have been shared with the ICO.

The Directors consider relationships with suppliers through the oversight of the Group procurement policy and Modern Slavery statement. The group procurement strategy describes how the Charitable Group manages its suppliers based on criticality, how it deals with performance issues and how it works with suppliers to continually improve performance and identify new and better ways of delivering services. The impact of the Charitable Company's operations on the community is referred to in the Environmental Policy in the Trustees' report.

Our intention is to foster good supply arrangements which benefit both the Charitable Company and the suppliers we utilise. Our aim is to be supplied with the goods and services we need at the best value and at the time required, through suppliers being offered fair, open and transparent ways to bid and provide these goods and services. We engage in regular dialogue with key suppliers and publish an annual Modern Slavery Act statement.

The outcomes of this engagement with our stakeholders informs Board decision making as described in the Trustees' report above.

### **Governance**

The Board of Trustees have delegated their powers and functions to a committee of Trustees known as the Group Board. All the Trustees of United Church Schools Trust ("UCST") are members of the Group Board. Members of the Group Board also include persons who are Trustees of United Learning Trust ("ULT"), a subsidiary Charitable Company. The Group Board of Directors has formally met 6 times during the year and the UCST Board of Trustees held 4 independent meetings. Attendance during the year at the meetings of the Trustees was as follows:

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

	<b>UCST meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson, Chair	4	4
Mr Ben Gordon	4	4
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	4	4
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	2	3
Mr Mike Litchfield	1	1
Dame Reena Keeble	3	3

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Group Board meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dame Yasmin Bevan	1	1
Sir Jon Coles	6	6
Dr Stephen Critchley	6	6
Ms Karima Fahmy	6	6
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	6	6
Mr Ben Gordon	6	6
Mr Richard Greenhalgh, Chair	6	6
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	3	5
Dame Sue John	3	4
Dame Reena Keeble	5	6
Mr Mike Litchfield	1	1
Mr Neil MacDonald	6	6
Dr Rania Marandos	6	6
Mr Christie Spurling	6	6

The Board of Trustees delegates clear responsibilities to the Schools' Local Governing Bodies ("LGBs"), whose purpose is to provide support and challenge to the school on behalf of the Board. The functions and duties of the LGBs are set out in the LGB Members' Handbook. The Group Board maintains links with the LGBs through the Head of Local Governance, and designated Trustees for the schools. The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the LGBs are invited to attend meetings of the Chairs' Forum, which meets three times in the academic year and provides advice on strategy and education, relevant continuing professional development and the opportunity for sharing of best practice with their peers. The Chairs' Forum meetings further enhance communications between LGBs and the Trustees.

In year, the Board carried out a Board skills gap analysis, a review of the link trustee roles and also reviewed Committee terms of reference and cycle of business.

In year the Board updated its processes and procedures including a code of conduct for Trustees which is aligned to the charity governance code. This has provided further clarity of the role of Trustees within the Charitable Group. The board conducted a self-evaluation in February 2023. This consisted of a questionnaire followed by a discussion at the Board away day. The outcome of this evaluation included revising the process for reviewing Trustee performance.

### **Board Committees**

The Group Board has four further committees, which advise on matters defined by their terms of reference. The Committees are the Finance Committee, the Risk and Audit Committee, the Nominations and Remuneration Committee and the Education Standards and Performance Committee. The minutes of all committees are made available to the Board of Directors at meetings of the Group Board and any matters of concern are highlighted.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

The Finance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Charitable Company properly plans the use of its finances and is adequately funded to undertake projected expenditure.
- review and recommend the annual budgets for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- monitor financial performance against agreed budgets.
- ensure, with the Risk and Audit Committee, that the Charitable Company's financial statements are supported accurately by management accounts.
- monitor and review the Charitable Company's arrangements in relation to investments and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees in relation to the appointment and removal of investment advisors.

Dr Stephen Critchley is the Chair of the Finance Committee. Attendance at meetings during the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dr Stephen Critchley, Chair	4	4
Mr Ben Gordon	4	4
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	4	4
Mr Mike Litchfield	4	4
Mr Neil MacDonald	1	2

The Risk and Audit Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure implementation of a risk management framework for the Group.
- ensure the Charities' annual financial statements are reconciled to the management accounts.
- ensure effective audit functions are in place (both external and internal).
- ensure adequate risk management processes are in place.
- ensure an adequate internal control environment is established.

The Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee is Mr Neil MacDonald. Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dr Stephen Critchley	4	4
Ms Karima Fahmy	3	4
Mrs Melissa Geiger	3	4
Mr Neil MacDonald, Chair	4	4
Mrs Janet Swadling	3	4

A Group Nominations and Remuneration Committee exists to oversee the appointments of the Group Chairman and Directors and to approve Executive salaries and remuneration. The Committee is chaired by the Chair of the Group Board, and it is advised by the Director of HR and the Company Secretary as appropriate.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

The Nominations and Remuneration Committee regularly reviews the terms of office, skills and attributes of the Board of Directors. On the basis of this, the Committee plans succession in order to ensure that the Board has available to it the range of skills and experience required to discharge its responsibilities. The Committee makes recommendations to the Board as to the need for new Directors and leads the process of recruitment of Directors as required, making recommendations of appointment to the Board. The Committee ensures that appointment is on merit, but also seeks to ensure that the Board reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

In considering Executive pay, the Committee takes account of the needs of the organisation for skills, experience and personal capabilities to enable it to achieve its objectives and the price of such skills in the labour market. The Committee considers that in order to attract and retain leaders with the skills to achieve organisational objectives, senior pay must be competitive in the marketplace, taking account of the pay rates of comparably senior and skilled employees in other organisations – particularly in comparable organisations in education, in public service and in the charitable sector, and taking account of the transferability of skills into other sectors.

The Committee is also mindful of the need for charities and organisations in receipt of public funding to set pay rates which are publicly defensible and seen to be appropriate.

The Committee considers annual pay in relation to the performance of the organisation, and of individuals against their objectives and in their broader contribution and in any changes to job role.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	4	4
Mr Ben Gordon, Chair	3	4
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	2	3
Dr Rania Marandos	2	4

The Group Education Standards and Performance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Trust discharges its responsibilities for education improvement in providing excellent education so that pupils are able to progress, achieve and to go on to succeed in life.
- advise the Group Board with respect to Group strategic educational priorities and key performance indicators.
- provide an overview, scrutiny and challenge of education performance of all schools.
- receive reports from the Executive regarding education standards and performance of schools, and to hold the Executive to account, against the approved Group strategic priorities and key performance indicators related to schools' educational performance;
- review annually the performance of local/cluster governing bodies to ensure they are operating at maximum effectiveness.
- receive reports from Executive regarding safeguarding, and to hold the Executive to account regarding the effectiveness of policies and process designed to keep children safe.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dame Yasmin Bevan, Chair	1	1
Sir Jon Coles	3	3
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	1	3
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	2	3
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	1	2
Dame Reena Keeble	3	3
Mr Christie Spurling	3	3
Dame Sue John	1	2

### **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 ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Charitable Company's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Charitable Company for the year from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

### **Capacity to Handle Risk**

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the Charitable Company 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 Charitable Company's significant risks that has been in place for the year from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

The Charitable Group has a risk register that identifies the key strategic risks facing the Group, the actions taken to mitigate those risks and the owners of those actions. Risk control is exercised by the senior management team, which reviews the risk register on a monthly basis. The Risk and Audit Committee considers the risk register at each of their meetings. Its views are reported to the Board of Trustees via the Committee's minutes and the Chair's report to the Group Board.

### **The Risk and Control Framework**

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

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

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

The Group employs an Internal Auditor and a Head of Internal Audit who have a direct reporting line to the Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee. The Internal Audit service operates best practice professional standards and guidelines. Internal Audit independently and objectively reviews, on a continuous basis, the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Charitable Company's objectives, and contributes to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

Internal Audit's role includes giving advice on internal controls and performing a range of checks on the Charitable Company's core financial systems. An increased level of control checks were carried out in the year including increased testing of school level controls, covering local governance, procurement, income, cash management, human resources, payroll and fixed assets. Furthermore, testing of non-financial systems and central office functions were conducted, including reviews of the organisation's safeguarding arrangements, IT technical assurance programmes, estates projects, absence management and pension arrangements.

On a quarterly basis, the Head of Internal Audit reports to the Board of Directors through the Risk and Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Directors' financial responsibilities.

For the year ended 31 August 2023, based on the work undertaken, an internal audit opinion of good assurance was given on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

These arrangements can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period.

#### **Chief Executive**

The Trustees delegate the day to day responsibility of the running of the Charitable Company to the Chief Executive Officer.

#### **Connected charities**

There is a relationship between United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) and other charities as set out in note 26.

#### **Directors' indemnities**

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Charitable Company has insurance in place to protect Directors and Officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Charitable Company business.

#### **Statement of Trustees' (collectively known as the Board) responsibilities**

The Trustees (who are also directors of United Church Schools Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law), including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. 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 the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company for that period. In preparing these financial

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102).
- 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.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charitable Company will continue in operation.

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 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.

**Disclosure of information to auditor**

The Trustees confirm that:

- so far as each Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charitable Company's auditor is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charitable Company's auditor is aware of that information.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*Rosalind Given-Wilson*

**Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson**  
Chair Trustee  
Date: 4/3/2024

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

---

## **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (the 'Charitable Company') for the year ended 31 August 2023, which comprise Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards including Financial Reporting Standard 102; The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Charitable Company's affairs as at 31 August 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

## **Basis for opinion**

We have been appointed as auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with regulations made under that Act. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section' of our report. We are independent of the Charitable Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## **Conclusions relating to going concern**

We are responsible for concluding on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify the auditor's opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Charitable Company to cease to continue as a going concern.

In our evaluation of the Trustees' conclusions, we considered the inherent risks associated with the Charitable Company's business model including effects arising from macro-economic uncertainties such as high inflation, we assessed and challenged the reasonableness of estimates made by the Trustees and the related disclosures and analysed how those risks might affect the Charitable Company's financial resources or ability to continue operations over the going concern period.

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 Charitable Company'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.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

The responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the 'Responsibilities of Trustees for the financial statements' section of this report.

**Other information**

The Trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. 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 Strategic Report and the Directors' Report, prepared for the purposes of company law, included in the Trustees' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- the Strategic Report and the Directors' Report included in the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matter on which we are required to report under the Companies Act 2006**

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

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which 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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

### **Responsibilities of Trustees**

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on pages 22 and 23, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

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](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Charitable Company and the sector in which it operates. We determined that the following laws and regulations were most significant: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS 102), Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006;
- We understood how the Charitable Company is complying with these legal and regulatory frameworks by making inquiries of management and those charged with governance. We enquired of management and those charged with governance whether there were any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations, or whether they had any knowledge of actual or suspected fraud. We corroborated the results of our enquiries through our review of board minutes, through our legal and professional expenses review and through inquiries of solicitors who served during the period;
- We assessed the susceptibility of the Charitable Company's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur and the risk of material override of controls. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:
  - Identifying and assessing the design effectiveness of certain controls management has in place to prevent and detect fraud
  - Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting policies
  - Identifying and testing journal entries, with a focus on manual postings, journals that directly impacted on the surplus reported in the statement of financial activities and journal entries posted in the closing and accounts preparation period
  - Identifying and testing related party transactions

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

- Inspecting the board and other committee minutes
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the relevant laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement item
- These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error and detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it;
- Assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included consideration of the engagement team's:
  - understanding of, and practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity through appropriate training and participation
  - knowledge of the charity and education sector
  - understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to the Charitable Company including:
    - the provisions of the applicable legislation
    - guidance issued by the Charities Commission.
- The team communications in respect of potential non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations, including the potential for fraud in revenue through manipulation of income and management override of controls; and
- In assessing the potential risks of material misstatement, we obtained an understanding of:
  - the Charitable Company's operations, including the nature of its income and expenditure and its services and of its objectives and strategies to understand the classes of transactions, account balances, expected financial statement disclosures and business risks that may result in risks of material misstatement.
  - the Charitable Company's control environment, including: the policies and procedures implemented by the Charitable Company to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework and relevant laws and regulations.
    - ◆ the policies and procedures implemented by the Charitable Company to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework and relevant laws and regulations
    - ◆ the adequacy of procedures for authorisation of transactions and review of management accounts
    - ◆ procedures to ensure that possible breaches of laws and regulations are appropriately resolved.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

**Use of our report**

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

*Grant Thornton UK LLP*

**Jim McLarnon ACA**  
**Senior Statutory Auditor**

for and on behalf of  
**Grant Thornton UK LLP**

Chartered Accountants  
Statutory Auditor

Birmingham

Date: 4/3/2024

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

	Note	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	4	-	4,843	4,843	3,343
Charitable activities	2,3	-	139,311	139,311	126,989
<b>Total income</b>		-	144,154	144,154	130,332
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable activities	5	-	140,199	140,199	123,929
<b>Total expenditure</b>		-	140,199	140,199	123,929
<b>Net income before net (losses)/gains on investments</b>		-	3,955	3,955	6,403
Net losses on investments		(6)	-	(6)	(3)
<b>Net (expenditure)/income</b>		(6)	3,955	3,949	6,400
Transfers between funds	16	(1)	1	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds before other recognised gains carried forward</b>		(7)	3,956	3,949	6,400
<b>Other recognised gains:</b>					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	23	-	125	125	1,065
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		(7)	4,081	4,074	7,465
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Total funds brought forward		2,443	26,090	28,533	21,068
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		2,436	30,171	32,607	28,533

All activities are continuing and there are no other recognised gains and losses.

The notes on pages 33 to 63 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**  
**REGISTERED NUMBER: 02780748**

**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023**

	Note	2023 £000	2022 £000
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	10	1,756	2,055
Tangible assets	11	8,543	7,132
Investments	12	210	216
		<b>10,509</b>	<b>9,403</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stocks	13	4	5
Debtors	14	65,155	59,118
Cash and cash equivalents		20,323	19,690
		<b>85,482</b>	<b>78,813</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	<b>(62,575)</b>	<b>(58,558)</b>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>22,907</b>	<b>20,255</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>33,416</b>	<b>29,658</b>
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>33,416</b>	<b>29,658</b>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	23	<b>(809)</b>	<b>(1,125)</b>
<b>Total net assets</b>		<b>32,607</b>	<b>28,533</b>
<b>Charity funds</b>			
Restricted funds	16	2,436	2,443
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted funds excluding pension liability	16	30,980	27,215
Pension reserve	16	<b>(809)</b>	<b>(1,125)</b>
Total unrestricted funds	16	<b>30,171</b>	<b>26,090</b>
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>32,607</b>	<b>28,533</b>

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023**

---

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*Rosalind Given-Wilson*

Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson

Date: 4/3/2024

The notes on pages 33 to 63 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

	Note	2023 £000	2022 £000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash provided by operating activities	18	4,350	10,214
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,975)	(2,585)
Proceeds from the sale of tangible fixed assets		1	-
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(2,974)</b>	<b>(2,585)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Interest paid		(743)	(441)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		<b>(743)</b>	<b>(441)</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>633</b>	<b>7,188</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		19,690	12,502
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	19	<b>20,323</b>	<b>19,690</b>

The notes on pages 33 to 63 form part of these financial statements

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies**

**1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - 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) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

United Church Schools Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £'000.

**1.2 Consolidation**

Consolidated financial statements have not been prepared as consolidated financial statements for the Charitable Company's ultimate parent undertaking, United Learning Ltd (formerly United Church Schools Foundation Limited), are publicly available from the Charitable Company's registered office and incorporate the results of the Charitable Company and its subsidiary undertakings. These financial statements therefore represent the results of United Church Schools Trust only.

**1.3 Income**

All income is recognised once the Charitable Company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donated services or facilities are recognised when the Charitable Company has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the Charitable Company of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the Charitable Company which is the amount the Charitable Company would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Bursaries and discounts awarded are charged in the year to which they relate, and are offset against the associated income.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.4 Expenditure**

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

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities. Charitable activities are costs incurred in the Charitable Company's educational operations. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the Charitable Company and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

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

Restructuring costs are recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to undertake restructuring activities, which includes redundancy payments.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

**1.5 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Company for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

**1.6 Company status**

The Charitable Company is a company limited by guarantee. United Learning Ltd (formerly United Church Schools Foundation Limited) (Company number 00018582) is the ultimate parent undertaking and sole member of the Charitable Company. In the event of the Charitable Company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charitable Company.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.7 Going concern**

The Trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate, considering whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Charitable Company to continue as a going concern. The Trustees make this assessment in respect of a period at least one year from the signing date of these financial statements. The Trustees have considered the effects of the current economic and political climate in reaching their conclusions, preparing an annual budget and monitoring performance against it with forecasts for the balance of the financial year and beyond, and preparing a range of cash flow forecast scenarios. The Charitable Company maintains reserves to meet unexpected obligations and forecast models indicate that, even allowing for the rising costs of inflation including wage inflation and interest rates, the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The financial statements have therefore been prepared on a going concern basis as discussed in the Trustees' Report on page 9.

Various cash flow scenarios have been modelled for the period to 28 February 2025. The worst-case scenario uses pessimistic assumptions including potential pupil number reductions resulting from high costs of living, and the model builds in higher levels of inflation and increased costs such as pay. However, even in this scenario the Charitable Company continues to have adequate cash reserves to meet its liabilities as they fall due during the forecast period.

Management have also considered the impact of the base and worst-case scenarios on debt covenants and concluded that these will not be breached. The headroom in the different cash flow models and the levers available to the Charitable Company have enabled management to conclude that there is no material uncertainty in management's going concern assessment.

**1.8 Intangible fixed assets and amortisation**

Intangible assets are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment. Amortisation begins when the intangible asset is available for use, and is charged straight line over the useful economic life of 8 - 10 years.

**1.9 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.9 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation (continued)**

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives.

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Freehold land	- not depreciated
Leasehold improvements	- Term of the lease
Motor vehicles	- 4 years
Fixtures and fittings	- 10 years
Computer equipment	- 3 years

Tangible assets donated to the Charitable Company are capitalised based on their fair values which then represents the deemed historic cost of the asset.

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.

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

**1.10 Investments**

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as 'Gains/(Losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

**1.11 Stocks**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks.

**1.12 Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charitable Company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

**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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.14 Taxation**

The Charitable Company is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Charitable Company is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

**1.15 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.

**1.16 Cash and cash equivalents**

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

**1.17 Liabilities and Provisions**

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 Charitable Company anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar charges.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.18 Financial instruments**

The Charitable Company only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors, loans from banks and other third parties, loans to related parties and investments in non-puttable ordinary shares.

Financial assets that are measured at cost and amortised cost are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

For financial assets measured at amortised cost, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. If a financial asset has a variable interest rate, the discount rate for measuring any impairment loss is the current effective interest rate determined under the contract.

For financial assets measured at cost less impairment, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and best estimate, which is an approximation of the amount that the Charitable Company would receive for the asset if it were to be sold at the balance sheet date.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset and the net amount reported in the Balance Sheet when there is an enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.19 Pensions**

The Charitable Company make contributions to a number of defined contribution pension plans for non-teaching staff and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charitable Company to the fund in respect of the year.

Retirement benefits to teaching staff are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS"). Retirement benefits to certain support staff are provided by 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 Charitable Company 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. As stated in note 23, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore 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 scheme and assets are held separately from those of the Charitable Company 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 high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each Balance Sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred. Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in other recognised gains and losses.

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

**1.20 Government Grants**

Government grant income from the coronavirus job retention scheme is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the grant income, receipt is probable, and its amount can be measured reliably.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.21 Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty**

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

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

*Actuarial valuations for Local Government Pension Scheme*

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost/(income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 23, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. For example, a 0.1% increase in discount rate would decrease the liability by £111k and a 0.1% increase in inflation would increase the liability by £112k. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2023. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

The estimates and assumptions that have a lower risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

*Unfunded pension obligations*

The Charitable Company has also made provision for unfunded pension obligations. The key assumptions made in computing this provision comprise mortality assumptions and discount rates, with the total obligation arising as a result having been disclosed in note 23. Any changes in these assumptions would impact the carrying amount of the liability.

*Depreciation of tangible fixed assets*

Depreciation is computed based on the best estimate of the useful economic lives of the relevant assets and their ultimate residual value.

*Provision for bad debts*

An allowance for doubtful debts is maintained for estimated losses resulting from the inability of the Charitable Company's fee debtors to make required payments. The Charitable Company applies a policy for providing for bad debts which is periodically reviewed based on an assessment of actual outcomes against those expected.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.22 Exceptional items**

Costs classified as exceptional relate to costs which are non-recurring and outside of the normal charitable activities of the company as disclosed in note 9.

**2. School fees receivable and catering income**

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Gross fee income receivable	<b>124,750</b>	<i>114,723</i>
Scholarships, bursaries and reduced fees	<b>(10,387)</b>	<i>(9,945)</i>
Catering income	<b>1,966</b>	<i>1,953</i>
<b>Net fee income receivable</b>	<b>116,329</b>	<i>106,731</i>

In 2023, of the total school fees receivable and catering income, £116,329k (2022: £106,731k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2022: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**3. Other educational related income**

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Support services to other schools and academies	<b>13,758</b>	<i>13,209</i>
Income from Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	<b>-</b>	<i>8</i>
Early years funding	<b>1,190</b>	<i>1,038</i>
Pupil registration fees	<b>361</b>	<i>331</i>
Charges for additional classes	<b>1,557</b>	<i>1,112</i>
Charges for school trips	<b>3,640</b>	<i>2,817</i>
Other school income	<b>1,998</b>	<i>1,299</i>
Rents and lettings	<b>478</b>	<i>444</i>
	<b>22,982</b>	<i>20,258</i>

In 2023, of the other educational related income, £22,982k (2022: £20,258k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2022: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**4. Voluntary income**

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Other sponsorship and donations received	<b>3,773</b>	<i>2,874</i>
Gift aid from subsidiary undertakings	<b>1,070</b>	<i>468</i>
Gift aid - COVID-19 donations	<b>-</b>	<i>1</i>
	<b>4,843</b>	<i>3,343</i>
	<b>4,843</b>	<i>3,343</i>

In 2023 of the total voluntary income, £4,843k (2022: £3,343k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2022: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**5. Analysis of total resources expended**

	Staff costs 2023 £000	Other costs 2023 £000	Depreciation 2023 £000	Total 2023 £000	Total 2022 £000
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
<b>Direct costs</b>					
Educational supplies	72,466	11,727	-	<b>84,193</b>	74,269
Staff development	303	71	-	<b>374</b>	279
Examination fees	-	773	-	<b>773</b>	372
Technology costs	3,305	2,453	-	<b>5,758</b>	5,256
	<u>76,074</u>	<u>15,024</u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>91,098</b></u>	<u>80,176</u>
<b>Support costs</b>					
Recruitment and support	-	607	-	<b>607</b>	471
Premises costs	4,087	12,183	-	<b>16,270</b>	14,537
Insurance	-	1,037	-	<b>1,037</b>	620
Catering	-	6,446	-	<b>6,446</b>	5,830
Marketing	1,069	1,661	-	<b>2,730</b>	1,991
Legal and professional	-	1,156	-	<b>1,156</b>	1,151
Other support costs	15,194	2,518	-	<b>17,712</b>	16,602
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	1,863	<b>1,863</b>	1,631
(Profit) on disposal of assets	-	(1)	-	<b>(1)</b>	-
Bank interest and charges	-	862	-	<b>862</b>	556
	<u>20,350</u>	<u>26,469</u>	<u><b>1,863</b></u>	<u><b>48,682</b></u>	<u>43,389</u>
<b>Governance costs</b>					
Auditor costs - audit fees	-	64	-	<b>64</b>	53
Company Secretariat costs	310	43	-	<b>353</b>	309
Trustees' meeting and travel	-	2	-	<b>2</b>	2
	<u>96,734</u>	<u>41,602</u>	<u>1,863</u>	<u><b>140,199</b></u>	<u>123,929</u>
<b>Total 2023</b>	<u><u>96,734</u></u>	<u><u>41,602</u></u>	<u><u>1,863</u></u>	<u><u><b>140,199</b></u></u>	<u><u>123,929</u></u>
<i>Total 2022</i>	<u><u>86,887</u></u>	<u><u>35,408</u></u>	<u><u>1,634</u></u>	<u><u>123,929</u></u>	

In 2023, of the total resources expended, £140,199k (2022: £123,929k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2022: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Total resources expended include:

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Auditor's remuneration:		
Audit of the charitable company's annual financial statements	<b>64</b>	<i>53</i>
Non-audit services	<b>9</b>	<i>9</i>
Depreciation:		
Tangible fixed assets, owned	<b>1,564</b>	<i>1,333</i>
Amortisation: Intangible fixed assets	<b>299</b>	<i>301</i>
Operating lease rentals	<b>1,084</b>	<i>802</i>
	<b><u>          </u></b>	<i><u>          </u></i>

**6. Net interest**

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Interest payable to Group undertakings	<b>743</b>	<i>441</i>
	<b><u>          </u></b>	<i><u>          </u></i>

**7. Staff costs**

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Wages and salaries	<b>76,770</b>	<i>68,830</i>
Social security costs	<b>7,872</b>	<i>7,176</i>
Other pension costs (note 23)	<b>11,595</b>	<i>10,523</i>
Agency fees	<b>497</b>	<i>358</i>
	<b><u>96,734</u></b>	<i><u>86,887</u></i>

During the year, there were redundancy or termination payments made which amounted to £859k (2022: £231k).

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

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>No.</b>	<i>No.</i>
	<b>2,349</b>	<i>2,241</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**7. Staff costs (continued)**

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

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>No.</b>	No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	<b>110</b>	75
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	<b>36</b>	32
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	<b>11</b>	9
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	<b>10</b>	7
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	<b>4</b>	4
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	<b>7</b>	5
In the band £120,001 - £130,000	<b>5</b>	3
In the band £130,001 - £140,000	<b>3</b>	5
In the band £140,001 - £150,000	<b>3</b>	3
In the band £150,001 - £160,000	<b>2</b>	1
In the band £170,001 - £180,000	<b>1</b>	1
In the band £180,001 - £190,000	<b>1</b>	2
In the band £190,001 - £200,000	<b>2</b>	4
In the band £200,001 - £210,000	<b>1</b>	-
In the band £230,001 - £240,000	<b>1</b>	-
In the band £260,001 - £270,000	<b>1</b>	1

Key management personnel, as listed on page 1, are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity. The remuneration for these individuals totalled £2,131k (2022: £1,624k).

During the year, the following amounts were paid in respect of higher paid employees as shown above:

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Pension contributions to defined contribution, teachers' pension scheme and local government pension schemes	<b>2,870</b>	2,209

During the year, 48 higher paid employees (2022: 37) participated in defined contribution schemes, 138 (2022: 106) participated in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (operated by the Teachers' Pension Agency), 2 (2022: 2) participated in the Local Government Pension Scheme and 10 (2022: 7) did not participate in Charitable Company pension schemes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**Payment to Trustees**

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2022 - £NIL).

No Trustee, or person with a family or business connection with a Trustee, received remuneration in the year, directly or indirectly, from either the Charitable Company or a company controlled by the Charitable Company.

Expense reimbursements paid to 2 (2022: 3) Trustees during the year amounted to £2k (2022: £2k) and all related to travel and subsistence costs.

**8. Interest on Local Government Pension Scheme**

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Interest on pension scheme liabilities	<b>(300)</b>	<i>(163)</i>
Interest income on pension scheme assets	<b>381</b>	<i>142</i>
	<b>81</b>	<i>(21)</i>
	<b>81</b>	<i>(21)</i>

**9. Exceptional items**

Exceptional costs incurred in school closures, mergers, acquisitions and disposals during the year ended 31 August amounted to £428k (2022: £798k).

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**10. Intangible assets**

	<b>Software development £000</b>
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 September 2022	2,995
At 31 August 2023	2,995
<b>Amortisation</b>	
At 1 September 2022	940
Charge for the year	299
At 31 August 2023	1,239
<b>Net book value</b>	
At 31 August 2023	1,756
<i>At 31 August 2022</i>	2,055

All intangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**11. Tangible fixed assets**

	Freehold land £000	Long-term leasehold property £000	Fixtures and fittings £000	Computer equipment £000	Motor vehicles £000	Total £000
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 September 2022	-	2,171	13,784	4,895	735	21,585
Additions	300	2	2,174	387	112	2,975
Disposals	-	-	(30)	(409)	-	(439)
At 31 August 2023	<u>300</u>	<u>2,173</u>	<u>15,928</u>	<u>4,873</u>	<u>847</u>	<u>24,121</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>						
At 1 September 2022	-	875	8,375	4,565	638	14,453
Charge for the year	-	34	1,090	358	82	1,564
On disposals	-	-	(30)	(409)	-	(439)
At 31 August 2023	<u>-</u>	<u>909</u>	<u>9,435</u>	<u>4,514</u>	<u>720</u>	<u>15,578</u>
<b>Net book value</b>						
At 31 August 2023	<u><u>300</u></u>	<u><u>1,264</u></u>	<u><u>6,493</u></u>	<u><u>359</u></u>	<u><u>127</u></u>	<u><u>8,543</u></u>
At 31 August 2022	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>1,296</u></u>	<u><u>5,409</u></u>	<u><u>330</u></u>	<u><u>97</u></u>	<u><u>7,132</u></u>

All tangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**12. Fixed asset investments**

		<b>Listed investments £000</b>
<b>Valuation</b>		
At 1 September 2022	216	
Fair value adjustments	(6)	
At 31 August 2023	210	
	2023	2022
	£000	£000
<b>Investments at value comprise:</b>		
Listed investments	210	216

All the fixed asset investments are held in the UK.

**Subsidiary undertakings**

At 31 August 2023, the Charitable Company held more than 20% of the following:

	Holding	Nature of the business	Class of share capital held
	%		
St. Ives (Haslemere) Limited*	100	Dormant	-
United Learning Trust*	100	Education	-
Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited*	100	Dormant	-

\*Limited by guarantee

The registered office address of St. Ives (Haslemere) Limited, United Learning Trust and Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited is Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, England, PE3 6SB.

**13. Stocks**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	£000	£000
Finished goods and goods for resale	4	5

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**14. Debtors**

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Trade debtors	<b>35,247</b>	<i>31,330</i>
Amounts owed by Group undertakings	<b>25,778</b>	<i>24,508</i>
Other debtors	<b>1,555</b>	<i>1,001</i>
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>2,575</b>	<i>2,279</i>
	<b>65,155</b>	<i>59,118</i>

**15. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Trade creditors	<b>3,568</b>	<i>2,481</i>
Amounts owed to Group undertakings	<b>6</b>	<i>6</i>
Other taxation and social security	<b>2,037</b>	<i>1,873</i>
Other creditors	<b>12,327</b>	<i>12,933</i>
Accruals and deferred income	<b>44,637</b>	<i>41,265</i>
	<b>62,575</b>	<i>58,558</i>

Amounts owed to Group undertakings are unsecured, interest free and repayable on demand.

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	<b>38,049</b>	<i>34,594</i>
Resources deferred during the year	<b>41,405</b>	<i>38,049</i>
Amounts released from previous periods	<b>(38,049)</b>	<i>(34,594)</i>
<b>Deferred income as at 31 August 2023</b>	<b>41,405</b>	<i>38,049</i>

Deferred income relates to fees invoiced in advance for the Autumn term.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**16. Statement of funds**

**Statement of funds - current year**

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2023 £000
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
<b>Designated funds</b>						
Designated Funds	2,659	(302)	13	4	-	2,374
<b>General funds</b>						
General Funds - all funds	24,556	144,456	(140,403)	(3)	-	28,606
Pension reserve	(1,125)	-	191	-	125	(809)
	23,431	144,456	(140,212)	(3)	125	27,797
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	26,090	144,154	(140,199)	1	125	30,171
<b>Restricted funds</b>						
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	714	-	-	(1)	(6)	707
	2,443	-	-	(1)	(6)	2,436
<b>Total of funds</b>	28,533	144,154	(140,199)	-	119	32,607

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**16. Statement of funds (continued)**

Designated funds are accumulated surpluses from prior years available for use by the School that generated the funds. In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the Charitable Company transferred £4 million of general funds to designated funds during 2020 to be used in support of those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

The Sponsorship fund has been formed to gather together the external donations received towards the Charitable Company's support for the academies of United Learning Trust.

Other donated funds include a number of individual donations towards specific building and other projects within the Group.

The transfer from general funds to designated funds represents a designation to the Arnold Development Fund which is available for the benefit of the AKS school.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**16. Statement of funds (continued)**

**Statement of funds - prior year**

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2021 £000</i>	<i>Income £000</i>	<i>Expenditure £000</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £000</i>	<i>Gains/ (losses) £000</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2022 £000</i>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
<b>Designated funds</b>						
Designated Funds	2,894	(322)	47	40	-	2,659
<b>General funds</b>						
General Funds - all funds	17,937	130,654	(123,998)	(40)	3	24,556
Pension reserve	(2,212)	-	22	-	1,065	(1,125)
	15,725	130,654	(123,976)	(40)	1,068	23,431
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	18,619	130,332	(123,929)	-	1,068	26,090
<b>Restricted funds</b>						
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	720	-	-	-	(6)	714
	2,449	-	-	-	(6)	2,443
<b>Total of funds</b>	21,068	130,332	(123,929)	-	1,062	28,533

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**17. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current year**

	<b>Restricted funds 2023 £000</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds 2023 £000</b>	<b>Total funds 2023 £000</b>
Tangible fixed assets	-	8,543	<b>8,543</b>
Intangible fixed assets	-	1,756	<b>1,756</b>
Fixed asset investments	-	210	<b>210</b>
Current assets	2,436	83,046	<b>85,482</b>
Creditors due within one year	-	(62,575)	<b>(62,575)</b>
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(809)	<b>(809)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,436</b>	<b>30,171</b>	<b>32,607</b>

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year**

	<i>Restricted funds 2022 £000</i>	<i>Unrestricted funds 2022 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2022 £000</i>
Tangible fixed assets	-	7,132	7,132
Intangible fixed assets	-	2,055	2,055
Fixed asset investments	-	216	216
Current assets	2,443	76,370	78,813
Creditors due within one year	-	(58,558)	(58,558)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(1,125)	(1,125)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,443</b>	<b>26,090</b>	<b>28,533</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**18. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities**

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	<b>3,949</b>	<i>6,400</i>
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation and amortisation charges	<b>1,863</b>	<i>1,634</i>
Interest paid	<b>662</b>	<i>462</i>
Decrease in stocks	<b>1</b>	<i>3</i>
(Increase) in debtors	<b>(6,037)</b>	<i>(2,107)</i>
Increase in creditors	<b>4,017</b>	<i>3,862</i>
Revaluation of fixed asset investments	<b>6</b>	<i>3</i>
Profit/(loss) on disposal of fixed assets	<b>(1)</b>	<i>-</i>
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	<b>(110)</b>	<i>(43)</i>
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>4,350</b>	<i>10,214</i>

**19. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents**

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Cash in hand	<b>20,323</b>	<i>19,690</i>

**20. Analysis of changes in net debt**

	<b>At 1</b>		<b>At 31</b>
	<b>September</b>	<b>Cash flows</b>	<b>August 2023</b>
	<b>2022</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
	<b>£000</b>		<b>£000</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	<b>19,690</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>20,323</b>

**21. Contingent liabilities**

At 31 August 2023, the Charitable Company was party to cross-guarantees on bank loans and overdrafts of the parent undertaking totalling £6,811k (2022: £11,581k).

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**22. Capital commitments**

There were no capital commitments at 31 August 2023 or 31 August 2022.

**23. Pension commitments**

The Charitable Company operates defined contribution schemes for the benefit of its employees. The assets of the schemes are managed and held externally on behalf of the scheme members in funds independent from those of the Charitable Company. Employer contributions payable to the schemes during the year amounted to £1.493m (2022: £1.389m). Employee and employer contributions payable to the schemes at the Balance Sheet date amounted to £205k (2022: £167k) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company operates two defined benefit pension scheme: the Teachers' Pension Scheme for England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff, and the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff of one school, which is managed by the Local Authority.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2016 and of the LGPS 31 March 2019.

Contributions amounting to £1,179k were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2023 (2022: £1,072k) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company also has an unfunded defined benefit pension scheme which is provided for in the financial statements.

Provisions for unfunded pensions included within the total defined benefit pension scheme liability amounted to £809k (2022: £1,125k). The current service cost amounted to £Nil (2022: £Nil) and actuarial losses recognised through other comprehensive income amounted to £195k (2022: £234k). Benefits paid during the year amounted to £121k (2022: £114k).

The current mortality assumptions in respect of unfunded pensions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on the retirement age of 65 are between 19-21 years. The discount rate applied in calculating the obligation is 5.40%, with future pension increase and inflation being 2.90%.

**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. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment.

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

**Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme**

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

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

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

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

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

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £10.023m (2022: £8.998m).

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 Charitable Company has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Charitable Company has set out above the information available on the scheme.

**Local Government Pension Scheme**

The Charitable Company is one of several employing bodies included within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee administered funds. Contributions to the scheme are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of triennial valuations using the projected unit method.

The total employer's contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2023 was £55k (2022: £55k). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 21.6 - 21.9 per cent for employers and 7.4 - 11.7 per cent for employees.

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Balance sheet date (expressed as weighted averages):

	<b>At 31 August 2023</b>	<i>At 31 August 2022</i>
	%	%
Discount rate	<b>5.40</b>	4.30
Future salary increases	<b>4.30</b>	4.40
Future pension increases	<b>2.90</b>	3.00
Inflation assumption	<b>2.80</b>	2.90

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

	<b>At 31 August 2023</b>	<i>At 31 August 2022</i>
Mortality rates (in years)		
- for a male aged 65 now	<b>21.0</b>	22.3
- at 65 for a male aged 45 now	<b>22.2</b>	23.7
- for a female aged 65 now	<b>23.4</b>	25.0
- at 65 for a female aged 45 now	<b>25.2</b>	26.8

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

	<b>At 31 August 2023</b>	<i>At 31 August 2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Equities	<b>4,213</b>	4,225
Bonds	<b>35</b>	394
Property	<b>827</b>	976
Cash	<b>52</b>	143
Other	<b>3,577</b>	3,214
<b>Total market value of LGPS assets</b>	<b>8,704</b>	8,952

The actual return on scheme assets was £(80k) (2022: £633k).

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities are as follows (for both the LGPS and unfunded pension scheme):

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Current service cost	<b>(64)</b>	(124)
Interest cost	<b>(300)</b>	(163)
Interest income	<b>381</b>	142
Administrative expenses	<b>(2)</b>	(2)
<b>Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities</b>	<b>15</b>	(147)

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

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

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

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

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening defined benefit obligation	<b>8,212</b>	<i>10,668</i>
Current service cost	<b>64</b>	<i>124</i>
Interest cost	<b>300</b>	<i>163</i>
Contributions by scheme participants	<b>19</b>	<i>20</i>
Benefits paid - LGPS	<b>(240)</b>	<i>(210)</i>
Benefits paid - unfunded obligation	<b>(121)</b>	<i>(114)</i>
Actuarial gains	<b>(1,626)</b>	<i>(2,439)</i>
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>6,608</b>	<i>8,212</i>

Movements in the fair value of the Company's share of scheme assets were as follows:

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening fair value of scheme assets	<b>8,952</b>	<i>8,456</i>
Interest on assets	<b>381</b>	<i>142</i>
Actual return less interest	<b>(461)</b>	<i>491</i>
Contributions by employer	<b>55</b>	<i>55</i>
Contributions by scheme participants	<b>19</b>	<i>20</i>
Benefits paid	<b>(240)</b>	<i>(210)</i>
Administration expenses	<b>(2)</b>	<i>(2)</i>
<b>Closing fair value of scheme assets</b>	<b>8,704</b>	<i>8,952</i>

The Charitable Company expects to contribute £59k to the LGPS in 2023.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

Amounts for the current and previous period are as follows:

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£000</b>	£000
<b>Defined benefit pension schemes</b>		
Defined benefit obligations (including unfunded pension deficit)	<b>(6,608)</b>	(8,212)
LGPS assets	<b>8,704</b>	8,952
Unrecognised asset	<b>(2,905)</b>	(1,865)
<b>Net deficit</b>	<b>(809)</b>	(1,125)
Experience adjustments on LGPS and unfunded liabilities	<b>1,626</b>	2,439
Experience adjustments on LGPS assets	<b>(461)</b>	491
	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Unfunded pension scheme liability	<b>(809)</b>	(1,125)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(809)</b>	(1,125)

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**24. Operating lease commitments**

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

	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Land and buildings</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>327</b>	<i>240</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>981</b>	<i>873</i>
After more than 5 years	<b>1,410</b>	<i>578</i>
	<b>2,718</b>	<i>1,691</i>
	<b>2,718</b>	<i>1,691</i>
	<b>2023</b>	<i>2022</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Other</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>1,280</b>	<i>1,084</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>1,878</b>	<i>782</i>
After more than 5 years	<b>98</b>	<i>3</i>
	<b>3,256</b>	<i>1,869</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,256</b>	<i>1,869</i>

**25. Directors' indemnities**

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Charitable Company has purchased insurance to protect Directors and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on school business. The insurance provides cover up to £2,000,000 on any one claim and the cost for the year ended 31 August 2023 was £nil (2022 - £nil). The cost of this insurance is included in the total insurance cost.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

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

---

**26. Related party transactions**

United Learning Ltd is the sole member of United Church School Trust (UCST).

During the year, United Learning Ltd charged interest totalling £743k (2022: £442k) and rent totalling £2,231k (2022: £1,787k) to the Charitable Company.

UCST is the sole member of United Learning Trust (ULT).

The Charitable Company provided central services to ULT. The total amount charged during the year totalled £13,754k (2022: £12,557k) and was computed so as to equal the actual costs incurred on a per pupil basis.

At the year end date, balances amounting to £25,778k (2022: £24,508k) were due to the Charitable Company, and balances amounting to £6k (2022: £6k) were due from the Charitable Company to other entities in the Charitable Group of which United Learning Ltd is the ultimate parent. These balances arise as a result of direct recharges of costs where resources are centrally procured, with the underlying transactions not therefore representing related party transactions.

There have been no other transactions with related parties that require disclosure under either FRS 102 or Charities SORP (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

**27. Ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party**

The Board considers that the ultimate and immediate parent undertaking of the Charitable Company is United Learning Ltd (Company number: 00018582) by virtue of the fact that it is the sole member and therefore has the ability to appoint or remove trustees. The principal objects of United Learning Ltd are the same as those of the Charitable Company.

In the opinion of the Directors, there is no ultimate controlling party.

The largest group of undertakings for which group accounts have been drawn up is that headed by United Learning Ltd. Copies of the group accounts can be obtained from Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, PE3 6SB.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

**28. Financial instruments**

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Financial assets</b>		
Financial assets measured at fair value	210	216
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	82,632	76,367
	<u>82,842</u>	<u>76,583</u>
	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Financial liabilities</b>		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	16,979	16,604
	<u>16,979</u>	<u>16,604</u>

**United Church Schools Trust**

England & Wales - Charity number 1016538

---

# Accounts

---

Registered number: 02780748  
Charity number: 1016538

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**CONTENTS**

---

	Page
<b>Reference and administrative details of the Company, its Trustees and advisers</b>	1 - 2
<b>Trustees' report</b>	3 - 23
<b>Independent auditor's report on the financial statements</b>	24 - 28
<b>Statement of financial activities</b>	29 - 30
<b>Balance sheet</b>	31 - 32
<b>Statement of cash flows</b>	33
<b>Notes to the financial statements</b>	34 - 63

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**Trustees**

The Very Rev. Dr John Hall  
Mrs Melissa Geiger (appointed 1 January 2023)  
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson, Chair  
Mr Ben Gordon  
Mr Richard Greenhalgh  
Mr Will Hagger (appointed 2 December 2022, resigned 13 January 2023)  
Dame Reena Keeble (appointed 1 December 2022)  
Mr Mike Litchfield (resigned 21 November 2022)

Biographies for Trustees can be found at [www.unitedlearning.org.uk](http://www.unitedlearning.org.uk)

**Company registered number** 02780748

**Charity registered number** 1016538

**Registered office** Worldwide House  
Thorpe Wood  
Peterborough  
PE3 6SB

**Company secretary** Mrs Alison Hussain

**Chief executive officer** Sir Jon Coles

**Senior management team** Sir Jon Coles, Chief Executive Officer  
Mrs Fiona Boulton, Director of Independent Schools  
Dame Sally Coates, Director of Secondary Education  
Mr Darran Ellison-Lee, Director of Primary Education  
Mrs Louise Johnston, Chief Financial Officer  
Mr Dominic Norrish, Chief Operating Officer  
Ms Anna Paige, Director of Strategy and Performance

**Independent auditor** Grant Thornton UK LLP  
30 Finsbury Square  
London  
EC2A 1AG

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**  
**(CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**Bankers**                      Barclays Bank PLC  
One Snowhill  
Snowhill Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6GN

**Solicitors**                    HCR Hewitsons LLP  
Elgin House  
Billing Road  
Northampton  
NN1 5BA

Stone King LLP  
3rd Floor  
Bateman House  
82-88 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB2 1LQ

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) (the Charitable Company) for the year ended 31 August 2022. The Trustees confirm that the Trustees' Report and financial statements of the Charitable Company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Charitable Company's governing document and the provisions of 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) ("SORP 2019").

### **Constitution and objects**

United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) is registered with the Charity Commission (No. 1016538) and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales), governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended in 2004. The Charitable Company is established for charitable purposes and in accordance with its Memorandum of Association its principal activity is to provide a liberal, practical and general education for children which includes religious instruction in the doctrine and duties of Christianity.

### **Members of the Board (hereafter called "Trustees")**

The present membership of the Board is set out under Reference and Administrative Details. All Trustees served throughout the year except where indicated.

Each member of the Board of Trustees holds one share in United Church Schools Foundation Ltd ("UCSF"), the ultimate parent undertaking.

### **Appointment of Trustees**

The Board has the power to appoint any person as an additional Trustee or to fill a casual vacancy. A Trustee holds office for three years, after which they must resign. They may remain in office for a further three years with the consent of the Board. Following this, they shall be eligible for re-election annually upon the proposal of the Chair.

The training and induction provided for new Trustees is dependent upon their existing experience. Where necessary, induction will provide training on charity, educational, legal and financial matters. All new Trustees are given tours of the Charitable Company's schools and the chance to meet with staff and students. They are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role as Trustees. Induction is tailored specifically to the individual. The Company Secretary works with the Trustees to identify training needs and steps to keep the Trustees updated regarding the regulatory environment.

## **Strategic report**

### **Strategies and activities**

The principal object of the Charitable Company is set out above.

Founded in 1883 as an educational charity anchored in the Church of England, the Charitable Company manages the operation of a group of Independent Schools to provide education for students of different abilities between the ages of 0 and 18. Its admission policies welcome people from all employment, faiths and backgrounds. In 2001, it created a subsidiary charity, United Learning Trust ("ULT") a multi-academy trust, to extend its work into some of the most challenging inner-city areas through the City Academy programme, and to this day the Charitable Company remains the sponsor of ULT.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

### **About United Learning**

The overall aim of the Charitable Group is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools which enable all young people to make a success of their lives. The roots of our charity can be traced back nearly 140 years, and over this period, we have founded and developed a large number of schools, focused on the most important social and educational challenges of the day.

Our strength as a group of schools lies in the unique collaboration between the state and independent sectors, in our national reach and growing regional clusters and in our dedication to continuous improvement, to developing each pupil's whole character and our pursuit of excellence. Our track record in some of the country's most challenging schools is based on structures and systems which ensure high expectations, rigour, enthusiasm and breadth.

As of 31 August 2022, United Learning – the trading name of the Charitable Group – comprises 13 independent schools operated within United Church Schools Trust ("UCST"), 75 state sector academies operated within ULT and a central office function that serves all our schools.

### **Operating review**

#### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

After two years of significant disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, schools returned to a period of relative normality in the 2021-22 academic year. Following guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), schools were no longer organised into 'bubbles' but pupils and staff who tested positive for Covid were required to self-isolate. The self-isolation period reduced over the course of the year but in the Autumn Term it was up to ten days. This meant that, once they were well enough to do so, pupils accessed remote learning provision during their self-isolation period.

As there were no longer any limits on gatherings, schools were able to operate as normal and we saw the return of whole-school events including assemblies, in-person parents' meetings, school productions and sports fixtures. Schools did, however, continue to operate safely and sensibly and robust cleaning and hygiene measures remained in place.

The focus of the academic year was on recovery and catch-up; both in terms of covering the academic curriculum and addressing gaps in pupils' learning as well as re-opening our schools' extensive extracurricular and enrichment programmes. At the same time, as a Group, we have been mindful of the wellbeing of staff and have taken steps to manage their workload and ensure they are suitably remunerated particularly against the backdrop of the rising cost of living.

#### **Framework for Excellence**

Our 'Framework for Excellence' sets out the principles of an excellent education that we follow as a group. This year, we launched the *United Learning Way*, which describes what we expect to see in our primary academies, secondary academies and independent schools as they exemplify these principles.

#### **Best From Everyone**

Our aim is to bring out the best in everyone. So we must expect the best from everyone, all the time. Every child is a special individual, capable of extraordinary things. Who can know the limits of any child's potential? So, we expect unreasonably - we constantly challenge children to do what they think they can't, to persist, to work hard and to be at their best.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

From every adult we expect the same: that they are at their best, expect unreasonably of themselves, are determined and resilient and pass those expectations on to the children in all they do. We act with the utmost love, care and good faith - the highest standards come with the greatest attention to the wellbeing of all.

**Powerful Knowledge**

Our most important purpose is to teach young people things they would not learn outside school, which free them to think and act more powerfully in their lives. Words and numbers are our most powerful ways of representing the world. Mastery of language and fluent mathematical skills are therefore our priority. We aim to prepare young people to make a success of their lives: a core entitlement to subject-based learning; the development of talents; an understanding of work and society.

Worthwhile learning is often hard. Inspiring teaching is what gives access to difficult concepts and the thrill of intellectual discovery. Powerful knowledge is not static or backward-looking. It includes the ability to critique, challenge the status quo, think and learn.

**Education with Character**

Academic success is very important. Exam passes are an important aspect of that. But there is more to a good education. Our schools also aim to develop character, compassion and service. Young people are expected to contribute to their school and to society; to try things which they think they cannot do; to persist in the face of difficulty; to become resilient in overcoming obstacles; to manage themselves; to work independently on things which challenge them; to work with others and in teams; to be courageous and caring; to lead.

We want young people to look back on a joyful schooling which has inspired and challenged them, given them wide opportunity and prepared them for the ups and downs of life.

**Leadership in Every Role**

Our children are leaders of the future. We expect them to start today - taking advantage of structured opportunities to lead and taking responsibility for themselves and others. Every adult in the school is a leader. In every word, tone and gesture, they set direction and expectation. We expect every adult to take responsibility to do what is right for the children.

All those in formal leadership positions create the climate in which others work. They demand the highest standards, build a performance culture, develop their teams and create the space for others to lead. All leaders listen, grow relationships, act with integrity and care and expect the best from themselves and others in building a happy, confident school.

**Continuous Improvement**

However good we are, we can be better. We constantly look for improvements and implement them with pace. We look for ideas for improvement inside the organisation and out; we observe one another; we steal good ideas with pride and look to make them better; we work together to improve.

We always look at the evidence and are rigorous in evaluating impact. We stop or change things which aren't working; we improve things which are. We aim for high leverage: high impact for low effort and low cost. We constantly look to have more impact for less cost and effort and to spend every pound wisely.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

### **Academic Performance**

Due to the pandemic, the Summer 2022 exams were the first external exams that pupils had sat since 2019 and allowances were rightly made in the awarding of grades to reflect the challenges pupils had faced. There were improvements across the Charitable Company's results compared to 2019 demonstrating the success of the schools' remote learning programmes. The level of improvement across the Charitable Company was higher than national levels.

#### **GCSE**

At GCSE, across our independent schools:

- 69% of entries were awarded at least a grade 7
- 92% of entries were awarded at least a grade 5
- 98% of entries were awarded at least a grade 4.

Notable performances included:

- **Guildford High School** where 97% of pupils achieved at least a grade 7 in English and maths
- **Surbiton High School** where 88% of pupils achieved at least a grade 7 in English and maths
- **AKS** where 100% of pupils achieved at least a grade 5 in English and maths.

#### **A Level**

Across the nine secondary independent schools, there were 446 pupils entered for 1,344 A Level entries. This is in line with 2019 when 443 pupils were entered for 1,352 entries. Headline results are:

- 33% of entries achieved A\* grades
- 60% of entries achieved A\*-A grades
- 80% of entries achieved A\*-B grades
- 92% of entries achieved A\*-C grades.

Notable performances included:

- **Guildford High School** where 94% of A Level entries were graded A\*-A
- **Surbiton High School** where 79% of entries achieved A\*-A grades
- **Tranby** where 46% of entries achieved A\*-A grades.

These results meant pupils were able to secure places at their university of choice include Oxbridge and Russell Group institutions.

After being paused during the Covid-19 pandemic, Ofsted and ISI inspections resumed this year. Banstead Preparatory School, Rowan Prep School, Ashford School, Guildford High School and Lincoln Minister School all received ISI inspections.

#### **Education with Character in Action**

As there were no longer any limits on gatherings, our schools were able to deliver extensive enrichment and extracurricular programmes in order to broaden our pupils' horizons and introduce them to new experiences. These included a number of Group-wide events and initiatives such as the annual International Art Competition, the StorySLAM creative writing competition, Student Leadership Programme and Access to Theatre.

In October, we saw the culmination of Green Love – an original music project open to all of the Group's schools. Pupils joined together virtually with thousands of their peers to see themselves in the online premiere which had been recorded in schools the previous academic year.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

### **Annual Surveys**

Each year we carry out pupil, parent and staff surveys.

Our annual surveys for pupils, parents and staff provide robust feedback on our progress towards our goals. They enable us to identify schools in need of support, and schools able to provide it. We encourage a 'you said – we did' strategy allowing any staff, parent, or pupil survey to maximise benefit and bring about positive change.

Headline findings from our Pupil Surveys across the Charitable Company's schools conducted in November 2021 include:

#### **At Prep:**

- 99% of pupils agreed that they were proud of their school.
- 94% of pupils agreed that they feel that they belong in their school.
- 94% of pupils agreed that their school gives them a chance to take part in lots of different activities outside of lessons.
- 92% of pupils agreed that pupils in their school behave respectfully towards each another.

#### **At Secondary:**

- 96% of pupils agreed that the adults in their school expect them to be successful.
- 92% of pupils agreed that their relationships with adults in their school are positive.
- 89% of pupils said they were proud of their school.
- 89% of pupils said they felt that they belonged to their school.

### **Successful Staff Engagement**

Our survey of all schools across the Group and central office staff, which was carried out in December 2021 by Edurio, found that our Overall Employee Engagement score (defined as "an employee's willingness to put discretionary effort into their work in the form of time, thought and energy") was 77%. The overall response rate to the survey was 77%.

Key findings of our staff survey include:

- 87% of staff said they valued their school's culture.
- 84% of staff said they support their school's strategy and direction.
- 81% said their job gives them a sense of personal fulfilment.

### **Leadership**

We continue to run our internal leadership development programmes. These are non-accredited, free, flexible, webinar-based, modular courses for our talented, aspiring and recently appointed leaders. They are designed to develop, build confidence and accelerate colleagues. The programmes bring together leadership expertise, theory and practice within an educational context. Our 2021 programmes concluded in December with 140 out of 167 completing their programmes, 32 for Aspiring to Headship, 44 for Senior Leadership and 64 for Middle Leadership. For 2022, we adapted the design following a feedback and attendance review to run these programmes across two terms between January - July. From this cohort, 137 out of 161 applicants successfully completed their programme: 19 for Aspiring to Headship, 45 for Senior Leadership and 73 for Middle Leadership.

We also launched a new programme for support staff leaders this year; the Executive Business Manager programme launched in 15 schools with 18 colleagues.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

Through our work this year, 86% of our schools have engaged with our leadership development offer. This comprehensive offer shows our commitment to staff becoming highly effective leaders; building the skills and knowledge to drive successful team performance and improve the education experience for children and young people.

### **United Teaching**

Our Initial Teacher Training Scheme, United Teaching, continues to move forward strongly. In the year, we recruited 173 people to train to teach with United Teaching. 100% of trainees 'passed' and were recommended for Qualified Teaching Status. Ahead of the 2022/23 academic year, another 173 trainee teachers were recruited and attended our Summer Institutes in July and August.

### **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships are a fantastic way for new and existing staff to learn, advance their skills and become qualified in their chosen career. We now deliver apprenticeships for support staff and teachers through our own apprenticeship provider, with courses tailored for colleagues working in the education section. We have three Level 3 courses, for HR Support and Teaching Assistant that launched in September 2021, and our Early Years Educator course which launched in March 2022. Our Level 6 Teacher apprenticeship (available via United Teaching) also launched in September 2021. As of March 2022, 3.43% of our workforce are apprentices, exceeding the government's national public sector target of 2.3%.

### **Inclusion, Diversity and Equality**

This year, the Group continued to build on its work on inclusion to ensure everyone feels trusted, valued, included and has a sense of belonging. Our priorities this year included:

- Continuing our Reverse mentoring programme through which 17 pairs entered mentoring relationships. Mentees held a Headship or Executive level position and were mentored by ethnic minority colleagues in teacher, leader or support staff positions. This programme has addressed unconscious bias and widened perspectives to gain a better understanding on how we can make United Learning a more inclusive workplace.
- Launching our Future Leaders Network for Ethnic Minority Teachers in June 2022.
- Reviewing our Key Stage 3 curriculum to ensure all pupils see themselves in the curriculum and that it takes them beyond their immediate experience.
- Conducting a detailed analysis of the Gender Pay Gap.
- Producing a Diversity and Inclusion Charter and Handbook to be used by all schools.

### **Our Group of Schools**

Our schools remained consistent throughout the year with no schools joining the group during this period.

### **Going Concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, including full consideration of the impact of the current economic climate, the Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

The financial results of the Charitable Company for the year were strong, ahead of budget in terms of operating surplus and cash reserves. The current year also started positively with strong pupil numbers ahead of budget. However, the original budget assumptions for the coming year are now known to be insufficient for the inflation on pay and energy costs. Since the approval of the 2022/23 budget, the Charitable Company has modelled the now expected costs for these two areas, which reduce the expected operating surplus. The Charitable Company is nevertheless in a strong position and able to absorb this level of surplus reduction for the year, but a full review is now underway to identify efficiencies and savings to be made with the target of bringing the 2023/24 budget back to targeted surplus levels. Various cash flow scenarios have been modelled for the period to 31 March 2024. The worst-case scenario uses pessimistic assumptions including potential pupil number reductions resulting from high costs of living, and the model builds in higher levels of inflation and increased costs such as energy. However, even in this scenario the Charitable Company continues to have adequate cash reserves to meet its liabilities as they fall due during the forecast period. In preparing these forecasts, management have considered the different levers available to them, such as operating costs savings and the timing of capital expenditure, which can improve working capital at the lower points in the headroom available, notwithstanding that these remain positive throughout. The Charitable Company has available to it a wide range of contingency measures which it could use to reduce costs and/or realise funds should that prove necessary.

Bank loans of the parent undertaking, to which the Charitable Company is party to cross-guarantees, were renewed in February 2022 and October 2022, and will now mature in February and October 2025 at the earliest. Management have also considered the impact of the base and worst-case scenarios on debt covenants and concluded that these will not be breached. The headroom in the different cash flow models and the levers available to the Charitable Company have enabled management to conclude that there is no material uncertainty in management's going concern assessment.

Therefore, based on the current financial position and latest forecasts, the robustness of cash flow management and the level of financial reserves available in the cash flow scenarios, the Board of Trustees are confident that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future, being at least twelve months from the date of approval of these financial statements. 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 Accounting Policies.

### **Financial Review**

The total surplus for the year amounted to £7,465k (2021: £2,427k). Included within these results was an actuarial gain on defined benefit pension schemes and other pension commitments of £1,065k (2021: £419k).

The schools operated by the Charitable Company during the year were as follows:

AKS  
Ashford School  
Banstead Preparatory School  
Coworth Flexlands School  
Dunottar School  
Embley  
Guildford High School  
Lincoln Minster School  
Rowan Preparatory School  
St. Ives (Haslemere)  
Surbiton High School  
The Royal School  
Tranby

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

The Charitable Company is a sponsor of ULT which is a subsidiary undertaking of the Charitable Company. ULT's aim is to found and manage academies under the government initiative. Academies opened to date are listed on the United Learning website.

### **Funds**

The value of restricted funds to be utilised in future years includes £714k (2021: £720k) for prize and scholarship funds and other donated funds and £1,729k (2021: £1,729k) for the sponsorship fund. Unrestricted funds amount to £26,090k (2021: £18,619k) including designated funds of £2,659k (2021: £2,894k). The assets are held in pursuance of the Charitable Company's objectives.

### **Plans for future periods**

The Charitable Company aims to continue to increase the number of pupils educated at its schools. This will be through organic growth and through mergers with other schools. The Charitable Company will continue to strive to improve the levels of performance of its students at all levels and will continue its efforts to ensure its prep students are well prepared for their secondary education and its secondary students are able to obtain jobs or a place in higher education, as they choose, once they leave its schools.

### **Funding**

The Trustees are satisfied that the Charitable Company's assets attributable to each of its individual funds are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in relation to those funds.

### **Principal risks and uncertainties**

During the year under review, the Trustees and senior management have formally identified, and documented, the major risks to which the Charitable Company is exposed. Those risks have been reviewed by the Risk and Audit Committee and risk management strategies have been implemented. Risk management is embedded in the day to day processes of the Charitable Company and its subsidiaries. Principal risk areas for the Charitable Company are the protection of pupils and employees, and of assets and data. Procedures and governance to minimise these risks are constantly being reviewed and updated.

### **Safeguarding**

The Charitable Company has Safeguarding and Child Protection policies in place, which focus on the need to ensure that its pupils are safe, feel safe and are fully supported in this respect by their school. These policies, which are available online, also provide a framework for its schools to develop secure processes for identifying and supporting pupils at risk of abuse. The implementation and effectiveness of these policies and procedures, which adhere to DfE guidelines on safeguarding and child protection, are regularly monitored and reviewed.

### **Information Security**

The Charitable Company has Information Security policies in place, supported by regular training (including at induction and annual refreshers) and guidance for staff. Specific software, practices and processes are mandated across all the Charitable Company's schools to reduce opportunities for security breaches and mitigate the impact of any loss. The implementation and effectiveness of the approach are regularly monitored and reviewed, including through periodic stress testing.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

## **People**

The Charitable Company depends on the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers and support staff to achieve its objectives, but currently operates in a challenging recruitment market. To mitigate this risk the Charitable Company's pay agreements for all staff are competitive within the sector (recognising current increased cost pressures), United Teaching is increasingly delivering a supply of quality teachers, and the Group-wide recruitment and retention handbook includes policies and advice for schools, including in relation to promoting diversity and inclusion. The Charitable Company invests in the development of its staff, including through provision of bespoke leadership development programmes and apprenticeship programmes for support staff, delivered through our own training provider.

## **Financial pressures**

The Charitable Company is reliant upon the parents paying its school fees promptly and an economic downturn could have a direct impact on parents' ability to pay their fees. The impact of the COVID-19 lockdown led to international travel restrictions and therefore boarding numbers were impacted. The political landscape is currently uncertain, government instability, a potential recession and possible changes in VAT and business rate relief rules could have a significant impact on the cost base of the Charitable Company's schools. Senior management and the Trustees therefore aim to keep abreast of the economic conditions both in the UK and abroad. Overheads are carefully monitored to ensure that resources are used effectively.

The markets in which the Charitable Company's schools operate are highly competitive. Consequently, the schools constantly review their processes to ensure that their pupils receive a first-class education that helps them to perform to their full ability in all aspects of school life.

A large proportion of the Charitable Company's costs relate to staff salaries, which are relatively fixed each year. There is a risk that a significant drop in revenue or further pay inflation or increases in pension contributions may lead to an inability to cover such costs.

To mitigate these financial risks senior management closely monitor all costs, including increased pension contributions, against budgets on a monthly basis. Variance analysis is undertaken to consider the impact of varying income and costs when budgets are being prepared and through monthly management accounts and reforecasts, and action plans are prepared and implemented to address any adverse impacts.

## **Pensions**

The Charitable Company also belongs to the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS") run by the relevant Local Authority for certain nonteaching staff. This is now a closed scheme relating to one school where employees transferred as part of the conversion from a maintained school. Under the application of FRS 102, the contributions made by the Charitable Company to these funded defined benefit schemes currently results in pension deficits recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities. Under FRS 102, the Charitable Company is required to account for the retirement benefits when it is committed to provide them, even if the actual provision will be many years into the future. Whilst FRS 102 may be seen as a better reflection of the obligations of the employer to fund pension promises to employees, it does not reflect the actual accounting arrangements of the Pension Fund. It requires the Charitable Company to recognise the total value of all pension obligations that have accumulated (including deferred pensions) at 31 August each year.

A better reflection of a pension fund's actual position comes from the more detailed triennial assessment made by the fund actuary. This assesses and examines the ongoing financial position of the Pension Fund. The actuarial valuation can differ considerably from the FRS 102 valuation. It is the triennial actual valuation that is used to review contribution rates to the Fund from the Charitable Company, to ensure that existing assets and future contributions will be sufficient to meet future pension payments, and thus creates a risk in terms of increased contribution rates.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

With regards to the LGPS risk senior management review the accounting reports prepared annually by the respective schemes' actuaries.

The Charitable Company's strategic risk register also covers risks relating to data protection, occupational health and safety, fraud, increasing cost of living, major incidents, growth, school performance and business continuity. Over the course of the year, the Charitable Company has amended its assessment of risk to reflect: the impact of the rising cost of living on its staff, families and communities; the potential for poor mental health and wellbeing to impact pupil and staff engagement; effective management of our future growth strategy; and a broader interpretation of the risks relating to governance.

### **Financial risk management objectives and policies**

The Charitable Company uses various financial instruments including cash and various items such as trade debtors and trade creditors that arise directly from its operations. The main purpose of these financial instruments is to raise finance for the Charitable Company's operations.

The main risks arising from the Charitable Company's financial instruments are liquidity risk and interest rate risk.

Financial risk management is managed by the central office finance department who act as the Charitable Company's treasury function ensuring that surplus funds are deposited to maximise interest receivable. In addition, it uses the Charitable Company's facilities in the most efficient manner. Those facilities are designed to ensure that the Charitable Company has sufficient available funds for day-to-day operations and for planned expansion and capital expenditure. The Charitable Company seeks to manage financial risk by ensuring sufficient liquidity is available to meet foreseeable needs and to invest cash assets safely and profitably. Short term flexibility is achieved by overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company finances its operations through retained surpluses and overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company is exposed to price risk in terms of fees but is content that these are in line with those in the sector, and budgets accordingly. The principal credit risk for the Charitable Company arises from its debtors. Payment terms are enforced by the Charitable Company's credit control department and debt collection is outsourced as necessary. Credit risk is further managed through regular contact with any families in financial difficulty in an effort to assist.

Liquidity and cash flow risks are managed through the appropriate and carefully managed use of financial instruments with our principal bankers.

### **Policies**

As part of managing our risks and to ensure good governance we outline some key policies below.

### **Reserves**

It is the policy of the Charitable Company to hold reserves in its unrestricted funds, which have not yet been committed or designated for any particular purpose. The Trustees have set aside these reserves in order to protect the future operations of the Charitable Company from the effects of any unforeseen variations in its income streams as part of a policy of good financial management practice. The Trustees have set the level of these reserves after undertaking a thorough assessment of the Charitable Company's needs and have concluded that a level of six weeks' expenditure is prudent, which is approximately £14,300k. As at 31 August 2022, there were total reserves of £28,533k (2021: £21,068k) of which £2,659k (2021: £2,894k) were designated, the pension reserve stood at a deficit of £1,125k (2021: deficit £2,212k) leaving a general reserve of £24,556k (2021: £17,937k). Reserves defined as net current assets amount to £20,255k (2021: £14,825k) of which cash stood at £19,690k (2021: £12,502k). Reserves represented by fixed assets stood at £9,187k (2021:

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

£8,236k). Designated funds are accumulated surpluses from prior years available for use by the School that generated the funds. In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the Charitable Company transferred £4 million of general funds to designated funds during 2020 to be used in support of those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

The Sponsorship fund has been formed to gather together the external donations received towards the Charitable Company's support for the academies of United Learning Trust.

Other donated funds include a number of individual donations towards specific building and other projects within the Group.

### **Investment policy**

The Charitable Company's cash reserves are used to set off against borrowings in other independent schools Group companies to minimise interest charges to the independent schools Group. Cash balances are invested with Barclays Bank. During the year the investment strategy produced returns in line with the Charitable Company's expectations and market rates.

### **Environmental policy**

The Charitable Company believes that protection of the environment is an integral part of good educational practice. The Charitable Company is fully committed to its responsibility for minimising the environmental impacts of its operations and will continuously aim to improve its environmental performance through the careful management of the Estate.

The Charitable Company seeks to engage all members of the school community to develop a sustainable approach to their work and activities so as to help it achieve its aims. The Charitable Company's commitment includes the environmentally prudent management of its buildings and operations, collaboration with suppliers to improve its indirect environmental impacts, and environmental programmes and education for its employees and pupils.

We continue to work towards a carbon neutral organisation which we hope to achieve by the end of the 2029-30 academic year. Key initiatives include:

- Continuing to ensure our electricity supply is sourced from renewables and investing to reduce our reliance on gas, including by replacing old, inefficient gas and reviewing all photo-voltaic installations across the Group.
- Working with our catering contractors Chartwells to track and reduce food waste and food-related carbon emissions across our schools.
- Engaging School Carbon Neutral Champions in each of our schools who work together to identify ways of further reducing carbon emissions.
- Reviewing our curriculum to ensure our pupils are more aware of environmental issues and have the knowledge and skills to be able to make informed decisions and feel better prepared for a world impacted by climate change.

### **Pay policy for key management personnel**

Details of the pay policy in respect of key management personnel is included in the Governance section on page 20.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**Employee involvement and employment of the disabled**

Employees have been consulted on issues of concern to them by means of regular consultative committee and staff meetings and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by management. Regular meetings are held with staff in our schools to brief them on major issues and discuss local issues. Each school also ensures that all staff are kept fully briefed through a variety of mechanisms, including staff meetings, notice boards, newsletters and the Group intranet United Hub.

All new staff joining the Charitable Company are fully inducted and annually the Charitable Company runs two induction programmes, lasting two days, for all teachers new to United Learning. The Charitable Company carries out exit interviews for all staff leaving the organisation and has adopted a procedure of upward feedback for senior management and the Directors.

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

- Equal opportunities policy
- Volunteers' policy
- Health & safety policy

The Charitable Company has in place a National Recognition Agreement with the main teaching and support unions. Regular joint meetings of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) are held with this Group where matters of mutual interest are discussed and agreed upon.

The union members of the JNC report back to their members through locally appointed representatives. Each school also ensures all staff are kept fully briefed by using a variety of methods including staff meetings and newsletters.

In accordance with the Charitable Company's Equal Opportunities policy, the Charitable Company has long established fair employment practices in the recruitment, selection, retention and training of disabled staff.

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

Details of the Charitable Group's Gender Pay report can be found on its website at [unitedlearning.org.uk](http://unitedlearning.org.uk)

**Fundraising**

United Learning has a soft fundraising approach. In prior years, the Charitable Group has received large donations from individuals, but generally, we do not actively fundraise.

Our current approach is to work with partners and suppliers from time to time to offer fundraising packages for specific events and programmes such as our annual student and staff award ceremony and our Enterprise Programme.

Our schools regularly fundraise for themselves or charities via events such as performances, non-school uniforms day and fêtes.

With the exception of the above, the Charitable Group does not contact or seek funding from the public or individuals, nor do we work with professional fundraisers. Occasionally, the Group is approached by trusts or individuals who are interested in working with us, and we will provide them with programme and funding information in order to explore funding opportunities that meet both parties' objectives and ethos. In prior years, we have submitted joint bid applications to trusts and funding bodies, such as the Department for Education and the Careers and Enterprise Company along with other charities.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

We are members of the Fundraising Regulator Fundraising Preference Service to monitor our fundraising complaints. We did not receive any complaints this year.

**Public benefit**

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit when reviewing the Charitable Company's aims and objectives and in planning future activities for the year.

The Charitable Company aims to educate as many young people as possible irrespective of their backgrounds. The main strands to its work are:

- Sponsorship of the ULT multi-academy trust
- Bursaries and other financial assistance
- Nurturing collaboration between schools and giving students and staff exceptional academic, sporting and cultural experiences

The Charitable Group aims to make a great contribution beyond the group, having a positive impact on our local communities beyond the school, on the national education system and on the wider world. Over the next five years, we will work together to ensure that we influence education policy and practice beyond our schools and are seen as people who will be active leaders and participants in promoting what is right nationally. We will contribute in every local community in which we have a presence, through the service of pupils, through supporting families and through community hubs; we have appointed a Head of Community Engagement to support schools in this area. We will ensure that our work is sustainable and seek to avoid negative impact on the environment and climate.

Beyond our schools, in March 2021 United Learning was appointed to deliver the EdTech Demonstrator Schools and Colleges Programme on behalf of the DfE. Funded by the DfE, the programme provides peer-led advice and training to help schools and colleges in England use technology to support remote teaching and improve their digital capability. As well as co-ordinating this national programme through 40+ demonstrator schools and colleges, the Charitable Company's EdTech team also acted as a Demonstrator school offering packages of support, ranging from guidance, online tutorials, webinars and recorded content. Following the end of the programme, we continue to engage in national networks and to use our expertise in this area to support other schools and trusts.

Over the course of the pandemic, subject leaders in our schools played an integral role in supplying online materials and expertise to support the Oak National Academy which was established by the DfE to develop over 40,000 free, high-quality and adaptable curriculum-aligned resources for schools across the country. These resources continue to be available on the Charitable Group's Continuity Oak website.

Staff across our Group, Head Teachers and members of our Executive Team have likewise provided support and expertise to working groups, research teams and national fora across the sector including in EdTech, curriculum reviews, qualification and exams policies and the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning.

**Academies**

The Charitable Company is the sponsor of, and works very closely with, ULT in managing a group of academies. Through interaction in all of the schools and academies, the two charitable companies work together to share best practice both ways, and to ensure they give pupils every opportunity to succeed during their education. This involves such activities as group meetings at every level to share best practice and the sharing of educational resources over United Hub.

**Access policy**

The Charitable Company works very hard to offer education to as many pupils as possible throughout England.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

Through its bursary policy, it widens the number of pupils attending the Charitable Company's schools. By setting up, sponsoring, and working very closely with ULT, pupils in state funded academies enjoy the same educational resources available throughout the Charitable Company's schools. The Charitable Company's schools all access United Hub, which enables teachers at any of the schools in the Group to collaborate, share resources and challenges, positively impacting on workload.

### **Bursary Policy**

The ability to offer education to children of families who would not be able to afford the school fees is very important to the Charitable Company. As a result of the desire to help children in this way the Charitable Company continued to operate its schemes of means tested financial assistance and its separate schemes of scholarships and family discounts, where parents have more than one child at one of our schools. Means tested assistance is available to those who would not otherwise be able to afford the fees and, equally importantly, in cases of hardship where pupil's education or future prospects might be at risk. Bursaries range in value from 5% to 100% of the school fee. During the year, the Charitable Company granted £0.8m (2021: £1.28m) to pupils attending its schools under means tested assistance. This equated to 0.7% of gross fees received (2021: 1.17%). Further details of our Bursary Policy and how to apply are on our website.

In addition during the year, the Charitable Company granted £326k of further discounts and £58k of payment deferrals from the £4m Hardship Fund set up during lockdown to support those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

### **Section 172 Statement**

The Directors fulfil their duty to promote the success of the Charitable Company, under Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) and consider the interests of United Church Schools Trust's key stakeholders when making decisions as follows.

United Church Schools Trust has a clear purpose which is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools which enable all young people to make a success of their lives. This requires the Board, senior leadership team and other employees to maintain an approach to strategic, financial and operational decision making that is values based and sustainable in approach, and therefore aligned to the requirements and expectations of Section 172. Our long-term success relies upon our delivering the strategic objectives described in the Directors' report above through our talented and committed employees; close working relationships with regulators and suppliers, providing benefits to both the pupils in our schools and the wider school community.

In the light of our purpose and strategy as set out in the Directors' Report our Directors take steps to understand the needs and priorities of each stakeholder group and do so via a number of mediums, including by direct engagement through school visits and discussions with employees; employee, parent and pupil surveys; and via committees and forums.

Strategic priorities are discussed with the Board at the start of each year. These are informed by our long-term vision, the outcomes for pupils and other key performance measures from the previous year and the outcomes of our stakeholder surveys. The Board sets key performance indicators and targets relating to these priorities and monitor performance against these at each Group Board meeting.

At Board meetings, the Directors receive reports summarising the current status of each of our schools and highlighting any notable successes or concerns. Sub-committees, as described in the Governance Statement, meet to enable scrutiny of a wider range of data and reports and to review progress against the strategic objectives.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

The Board has designated named Directors to act as the key link between the Board and Local Governing Bodies, and with the education teams. There are two such designated Directors, one each for secondary and primary academies. The Board has also identified link Directors for safeguarding, people, health & safety, estates, finance and risk management. Link Directors attend relevant meetings of the Executive and speak regularly with relevant key employees to provide regular oversight and ensure they understand the key issues facing the organisation and how these are being tackled.

All Directors are invited to visit schools on a regular basis. These visits are generally scheduled alongside education teams so that they are able to observe the way in which Education Directors engage with senior school staff in pursuing improvement priorities. Their notes of visits are shared with the Executive and with the Board.

United Church Schools Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission and has due regard to the Commission's guidance. The Trust is regulated by the Information Commissioner's Officer ("ICO"), and policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations, which have been shared with the ICO.

The Directors consider relationships with suppliers through the oversight of the Group procurement policy and Modern Slavery statement. The group procurement strategy describes how the Charitable Group manages its suppliers based on criticality, how it deals with performance issues and how it works with suppliers to continually improve performance and identify new and better ways of delivering services. The impact of the Charitable Company's operations on the community is referred to in the Environmental Policy in the Trustees' report.

The outcomes of this engagement with our stakeholders informs Board decision making as described in the Trustees' report above.

### **Governance**

The Board of Trustees have delegated their powers and functions to a committee of Trustees known as the Group Board. All the Trustees of United Church Schools Trust ("UCST") are members of the Group Board. Members of the Group Board also include persons who are Trustees of United Learning Trust ("ULT"), a subsidiary Charitable Company. The Group Board of Directors has formally met 8 times during the year and the UCST Board of Trustees held 5 independent meetings. Attendance during the year at the meetings of the Trustees was as follows:

	<b>UCST meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson, Chair	4	5
Mr Ben Gordon	3	5
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	5	5
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	4	5
Mr Mike Litchfield	5	5

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Group Board meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dame Yasmin Bevan	7	8
Sir Jon Coles	7	8
Dr Stephen Critchley	7	8
Mr Neil Davidson	5	6
Ms Karima Fahmy	5	5
Mr Michael George	1	2
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	7	8
Mr Ben Gordon	6	8
Mr Richard Greenhalgh, Chair	8	8
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	5	8
Dame Reena Keeble	7	8
Mr Mike Litchfield	7	8
Mr Neil MacDonald	6	8
Dr Rania Marandos	6	6
Mr Christie Spurling	6	6

The Board of Trustees delegates clear responsibilities to the Schools' Local Governing Bodies ("LGBs"), whose purpose is to provide support and challenge to the school on behalf of the Board. The functions and duties of the LGBs are set out in the LGB Members' Handbook. The Group Board maintains links with the LGBs through the Head of Local Governance, and designated Trustees for the schools. The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the LGBs are invited to attend meetings of the Chairs' Forum, which meets three times in the academic year and provides advice on strategy and education, relevant continuing professional development and the opportunity for sharing of best practice with their peers. The Chairs' Forum meetings further enhance communications between LGBs and the Trustees.

In year, the Board carried out a Board skills gap analysis, a review of the link trustee roles and also reviewed Committee terms of reference and cycle of business. The Group Board is also currently considering the implementation of recommendations made by an external consultant, in order to further strengthen governance arrangements.

As a result, the Board has refined and documented its processes and procedures including a code of conduct for Trustees which is aligned to the charity governance code. This has provided further clarity of the role of Trustee within the Charitable Group. The next self-evaluation is scheduled for February 2023.

#### **Board Committees**

The Group Board has four further committees, which advise on matters defined by their terms of reference. The Committees are the Finance Committee, the Risk and Audit Committee, the Nominations and Remuneration Committee and the Education Standards and Performance Committee. The minutes of all committees are made available to the Board of Directors at meetings of the Group Board and any matters of concern are highlighted.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

The Finance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Charitable Company properly plans the use of its finances and is adequately funded to undertake projected expenditure.
- review and recommend the annual budgets for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- monitor financial performance against agreed budgets.
- ensure, with the Risk and Audit Committee, that the Charitable Company's financial statements are supported accurately by management accounts.
- monitor and review the Charitable Company's arrangements in relation to investments and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees in relation to the appointment and removal of investment advisors.

Dr Stephen Critchley was appointed as Chair of the Finance Committee in July following Mr Neil Davidson's resignation. Attendance at meetings during the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Neil Davidson, Chair (resigned 5 July 2022)	7	7
Dr Stephen Critchley, Chair	8	8
Mr Michael George	6	8
Mr Ben Gordon	5	8
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	7	8
Mr Mike Litchfield	8	8

The Risk and Audit Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure implementation of a risk management framework for the Group.
- ensure the Charities' annual financial statements are reconciled to the management accounts.
- ensure effective audit functions are in place (both external and internal).
- ensure adequate risk management processes are in place.
- ensure an adequate internal control environment is established.

The Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee is Mr Neil MacDonald. Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dr Stephen Critchley	3	4
Ms Karima Fahmy	1	1
Mrs Melissa Geiger	4	4
Mrs Kristen Hewson	1	1
Mr Neil MacDonald, Chair	4	4
Mrs Janet Swadling	4	4

A Group Nominations and Remuneration Committee exists to oversee the appointments of the Group Chairman and Directors and to approve Executive salaries and remuneration. The Committee is chaired by the Chair of the Group Board, and it is advised by the Director of HR and the Company Secretary as appropriate.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

The Nominations and Remuneration Committee regularly reviews the terms of office, skills and attributes of the Board of Directors. On the basis of this, the Committee plans succession in order to ensure that the Board has available to it the range of skills and experience required to discharge its responsibilities. The Committee makes recommendations to the Board as to the need for new Directors and leads the process of recruitment of Directors as required, making recommendations of appointment to the Board. The Committee ensures that appointment is on merit, but also seeks to ensure that the Board reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

In considering Executive pay, the Committee takes account of the needs of the organisation for skills, experience and personal capabilities to enable it to achieve its objectives and the price of such skills in the labour market. The Committee considers that in order to attract and retain leaders with the skills to achieve organisational objectives, senior pay must be competitive in the marketplace, taking account of the pay rates of comparably senior and skilled employees in other organisations – particularly in comparable organisations in education, in public service and in the charitable sector, and taking account of the transferability of skills into other sectors.

The Committee is also mindful of the need for charities and organisations in receipt of public funding to set pay rates which are publicly defensible and seen to be appropriate.

The Committee considers annual pay in relation to the performance of the organisation, and of individuals against their objectives and in their broader contribution and in any changes to job role.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Richard Greenhalgh, Chair	3	3
Mr Ben Gordon	2	3
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	1	3
Dr Rania Marandos	2	2

The Group Education Standards and Performance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Trust discharges its responsibilities for education improvement in providing excellent education so that pupils are able to progress, achieve and to go on to succeed in life.
- advise the Group Board with respect to Group strategic educational priorities and key performance indicators.
- provide an overview, scrutiny and challenge of education performance of all schools.
- receive reports from the Executive regarding education standards and performance of schools, and to hold the Executive to account, against the approved Group strategic priorities and key performance indicators related to schools' educational performance;
- review annually the performance of local/cluster governing bodies to ensure they are operating at maximum effectiveness.
- receive reports from Executive regarding safeguarding, and to hold the Executive to account regarding the effectiveness of policies and process designed to keep children safe.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dame Yasmin Bevan, Chair	3	3
Sir Jon Coles	3	3
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	2	3
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	3	3
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	-	3
Dame Reena Keeble	3	3
Mr Christie Spurling	1	2

### **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 ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Charitable Company's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Charitable Company for the year from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022 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 Charitable Company 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 Charitable Company's significant risks that has been in place for the year from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

The Charitable Group has a risk register that identifies the key strategic risks facing the Group, the actions taken to mitigate those risks and the owners of those actions. Risk control is exercised by the senior management team, which reviews the risk register on a monthly basis. The Risk and Audit Committee considers the risk register at each of their meetings. Its views are reported to the Board of Trustees via the Committee's minutes and the Chair's report to the Group Board.

### **The Risk and Control Framework**

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

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

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

The Group employs an Internal Auditor and a Head of Internal Audit who have a direct reporting line to the Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee. The Internal Audit service operates best practice professional standards and guidelines. Internal Audit independently and objectively reviews, on a continuous basis, the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Charitable Company's objectives, and contributes to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

Internal Audit's role includes giving advice on internal controls and performing a range of checks on the Charitable Company's core financial systems. An increased level of control checks were carried out in the year including increased testing of school level controls, covering local governance, procurement, income, cash management, human resources, payroll and fixed assets. Furthermore, testing of nonfinancial systems and central office functions were conducted, including reviews of the organisation's payroll arrangements, school fees, and settlement payment arrangements.

On a quarterly basis, the Head of Internal Audit reports to the Board of Directors through the Risk and Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Directors' financial responsibilities.

For the year ended 31 August 2022, based on the work undertaken, an internal audit opinion of reasonable assurance was given on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

These arrangements can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period.

#### **Chief Executive**

The Trustees delegate the day to day responsibility of the running of the Charitable Company to the Chief Executive Officer.

#### **Connected charities**

There is a relationship between United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) and other charities as set out in note 25.

#### **Statement of Trustees' (collectively known as the Board) responsibilities**

The Trustees (who are also directors of United Church Schools Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law), including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. 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 the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102).
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charitable Company will continue in operation.

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 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.

**Disclosure of information to auditor**

The Trustees confirm that:

- so far as each Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charitable Company's auditor is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charitable Company's auditor is aware of that information.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*Rosalind Given-Wilson*

**Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson**  
Chair Trustee  
Date: 4/2/2023

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

---

## **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (the 'Charitable Company') for the year ended 31 August 2022 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102; The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Charitable Company's affairs as at 31 August 2022 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.

## **Basis for opinion**

We have been appointed as auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with regulations made under that Act. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section' of our report. We are independent of the Charitable Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## **Conclusions relating to going concern**

We are responsible for concluding on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify the auditor's opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Charitable Company to cease to continue as a going concern.

In our evaluation of the Trustees' conclusions, we considered the inherent risks associated with the Charitable Company's business model including effects arising from macro-economic uncertainties such as Brexit and Covid-19, we assessed and challenged the reasonableness of estimates made by the Trustees and the related disclosures and analysed how those risks might affect the Charitable Company's financial resources or ability to continue operations over the going concern period.

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 Charitable Company'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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

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.

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

**Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Trustees' 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is 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 Strategic Report and the Directors' Report, prepared for the purposes of company law, included in the Trustees' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- the Strategic Report and the Directors' Report included in the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matter on which we are required to report under the Companies Act 2006**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Charitable Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Strategic Report or the Directors' Report included in the Trustees' Report.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which 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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

### **Responsibilities of Trustees**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities set out on page 22 and 23, the trustees (who are also the directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the Charitable Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Charitable Company and the sector in which it operates. We determined that the following laws and regulations were most significant: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS 102), Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006,
- We understood how the Charitable Company is complying with these legal and regulatory frameworks by making inquiries of management and those charged with governance. We enquired of management and those charged with governance whether there were any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations, or whether they had any knowledge of actual or suspected fraud. We corroborated the results of our enquiries through our review of board minutes, through our legal and professional expenses review and through inquiries of solicitors who served during the period;
- We assessed the susceptibility of the Charitable Company's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur and the risk of material override of controls. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:
  - Identifying and assessing the design effectiveness of certain controls management has in place to prevent and detect fraud
  - Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting policies
  - Identifying and testing journal entries, with a focus on manual postings, journals that directly impacted on the surplus reported in the statement of financial activities and journal entries posted in the closing and accounts preparation period
  - Identifying and testing related party transactions

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

- Inspecting the board and other committee minutes
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the relevant laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement item
- These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error and detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it;
- Assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included consideration of the engagement team's:
  - understanding of, and practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity through appropriate training and participation
  - knowledge of the charity and education sector
  - understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to the Charitable Company including:
    - the provisions of the applicable legislation
    - guidance issued by the Charities Commission.
- The team communications in respect of potential non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations, including the potential for fraud in revenue through manipulation of income and management override of controls; and
- In assessing the potential risks of material misstatement, we obtained an understanding of:
  - the Charitable Company's operations, including the nature of its income and expenditure and its services and of its objectives and strategies to understand the classes of transactions, account balances, expected financial statement disclosures and business risks that may result in risks of material misstatement.
  - the Charitable Company's control environment, including: the policies and procedures implemented by the Charitable Company to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework and relevant laws and regulations.
  - the policies and procedures implemented by the Charitable Company to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework and relevant laws and regulations
  - the adequacy of procedures for authorisation of transactions and review of management accounts
  - procedures to ensure that possible breaches of laws and regulations are appropriately resolved.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

**Use of our report**

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

*Grant Thornton UK LLP*

**Stephen Dean FCA**  
**Senior Statutory Auditor**

for and on behalf of  
**Grant Thornton UK LLP**

Statutory Auditor, Chartered Accountants

London

Date: 8/2/2023

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

	Note	Restricted funds 2022 £000	Unrestricted funds 2022 £000	Continuing operations 2022 £000	Total funds 2022 £000	Continuing operations 2021 £000	Discontinued operations 2021 £000	Total funds 2021 £000
<b>Income from:</b>								
Donations and legacies	4	-	3,343	3,343	3,343	2,257	160	2,417
Charitable activities	2, 3	-	126,989	126,989	126,989	118,064	1,480	119,544
<b>Total income</b>		-	130,332	130,332	130,332	120,321	1,640	121,961
<b>Expenditure on:</b>								
Charitable activities	5	-	123,929	123,929	123,929	116,663	3,292	119,955
<b>Total expenditure</b>		-	123,929	123,929	123,929	116,663	3,292	119,955
<b>Net income before net (losses)/gains on investments</b>		-	6,403	6,403	6,403	3,658	(1,652)	2,006
Net (losses)/gains on investments		(6)	3	(3)	(3)	2	-	2
<b>Net movement in funds before other recognised gains carried forward</b>		(6)	6,406	6,400	6,400	3,660	(1,652)	2,008

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

	Note	Restricted funds 2022 £000	Unrestricted funds 2022 £000	Continuing operations 2022 £000	Total funds 2022 £000	Continuing operations 2021 £000	Discontinued operations 2021 £000	Total funds 2021 £000
<b>Net movement in funds before other recognised gains brought forward</b>		(6)	6,406	6,400	6,400	3,660	(1,652)	2,008
<b>Other recognised gains:</b>								
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	23	-	1,065	1,065	1,065	419	-	419
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		(6)	7,471	7,465	7,465	4,079	(1,652)	2,427
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>								
Total funds brought forward		2,449	18,619	21,068	21,068	18,641	-	18,641
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		2,443	26,090	28,533	28,533	22,720	(1,652)	21,068

All activities are continuing and there are no other recognised gains and losses.

The notes on pages 34 to 63 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**  
**REGISTERED NUMBER: 02780748**

**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2022**

	Note	2022 £000	2021 £000
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	10	2,055	2,356
Tangible assets	11	7,132	5,880
Investments	12	216	219
		9,403	8,455
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stocks	13	5	8
Debtors	14	59,118	57,011
Cash and cash equivalents		19,690	12,502
		78,813	69,521
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	(58,558)	(54,696)
<b>Net current assets</b>		20,255	14,825
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		29,658	23,280
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		29,658	23,280
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	23	(1,125)	(2,212)
<b>Total net assets</b>		28,533	21,068
<b>Charity funds</b>			
Restricted funds	16	2,443	2,449
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted funds excluding pension liability	16	27,215	20,831
Pension reserve	16	(1,125)	(2,212)
Total unrestricted funds	16	26,090	18,619
<b>Total funds</b>		28,533	21,068

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*Rosalind Given-Wilson*

Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson

Date: 4/2/2023

The notes on pages 34 to 63 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

	Note	2022 £000	2021 £000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash provided by operating activities	18	10,214	6,960
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of intangible fixed assets		-	(419)
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,585)	(1,917)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(2,585)</b>	<b>(2,336)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Interest paid		(441)	(376)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		<b>(441)</b>	<b>(376)</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>7,188</b>	<b>4,248</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		12,502	8,254
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	19	<b>19,690</b>	<b>12,502</b>

The notes on pages 34 to 63 form part of these financial statements

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**1. Accounting policies**

**1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - 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) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

United Church Schools Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £'000.

**1.2 Consolidation**

Consolidated financial statements have not been prepared as consolidated financial statements for the Charitable Company's ultimate parent undertaking, United Church Schools Foundation Limited, are publicly available from the Charitable Company's registered office and incorporate the results of the Charitable Company and its subsidiary undertakings. These financial statements therefore represent the results of United Church Schools Trust only.

**1.3 Income**

All income is recognised once the Charitable Company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donated services or facilities are recognised when the Charitable Company has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the Charitable Company of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the Charitable Company which is the amount the Charitable Company would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Bursaries and discounts awarded are charged in the year to which they relate, and are offset against the associated income.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.4 Expenditure**

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

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities. Charitable activities are costs incurred in the Charitable Company's educational operations. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the Charitable Company and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

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

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

**1.5 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Company for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

**1.6 Company status**

The Charitable Company is a company limited by guarantee. United Church Schools Foundation Limited (Company number 00018582) is the ultimate parent undertaking and sole member of the Charitable Company. In the event of the Charitable Company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charitable Company.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.7 Going concern**

The Directors assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate, considering whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Charitable Company to continue as a going concern. The Directors make this assessment in respect of a period at least one year from the signing date of these financial statements. The Directors have considered the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the current economic climate in reaching their conclusions, preparing an annual budget and monitoring performance against it with forecasts for the balance of the financial year and beyond, and preparing a range of cash flow forecast scenarios. The Charitable Company maintains reserves to meet unexpected obligations and forecast models indicate that, even allowing for the economic impacts of the pandemic and rising costs of inflation, the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The financial statements have therefore been prepared on a going concern basis as discussed in the Directors' Report on pages 8 and 9.

Various cash flow scenarios have been modelled for the period to 31 March 2024. These models assume that there will be no further lockdowns leading to prolonged school closures and hence no further fee discounts required. The worst-case scenario uses pessimistic assumptions including potential pupil number reductions resulting from high costs of living, and the model builds in higher levels of inflation and increased costs such as energy. However, even in this scenario the Charitable Company continues to have adequate cash reserves to meet its liabilities as they fall due during the forecast period.

Management have also considered the impact of the base and worst-case scenarios on debt covenants and concluded that these will not be breached. The headroom in the different cash flow models and the levers available to the Charitable Company have enabled management to conclude that there is no material uncertainty in management's going concern assessment.

**1.8 Intangible fixed assets and amortisation**

Intangible assets are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment. Amortisation begins when the intangible asset is available for use, and is charged straight line over the useful economic life of 8 - 10 years.

**1.9 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.9 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation (continued)**

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives.

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Leasehold improvements	- Term of the lease
Motor vehicles	- 4 years
Fixtures and fittings	- 10 years
Computer equipment	- 3 years

Tangible assets donated to the Charitable Company are capitalised based on their fair values which then represents the deemed historic cost of the asset.

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.

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

**1.10 Investments**

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as 'Gains/(Losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

**1.11 Stocks**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks.

**1.12 Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charitable Company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

**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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.14 Taxation**

The Charitable Company is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Charitable Company is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

**1.15 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.

**1.16 Cash and cash equivalents**

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

**1.17 Liabilities and Provisions**

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 Charitable Company anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar charges.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.18 Financial instruments**

The Charitable Company only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors, loans from banks and other third parties, loans to related parties and investments in non-puttable ordinary shares.

Financial assets that are measured at cost and amortised cost are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

For financial assets measured at amortised cost, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. If a financial asset has a variable interest rate, the discount rate for measuring any impairment loss is the current effective interest rate determined under the contract.

For financial assets measured at cost less impairment, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and best estimate, which is an approximation of the amount that the Charitable Company would receive for the asset if it were to be sold at the balance sheet date.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset and the net amount reported in the Balance Sheet when there is an enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.19 Pensions**

The Charitable Company make contributions to a number of defined contribution pension plans for non-teaching staff and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charitable Company to the fund in respect of the year.

Retirement benefits to teaching staff are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS"). Retirement benefits to certain support staff are provided by 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 Charitable Company 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. As stated in note 23, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore 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 scheme and assets are held separately from those of the Charitable Company 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 high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each Balance Sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred. Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in other recognised gains and losses.

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

**1.20 Government Grants**

Government grant income from the coronavirus job retention scheme is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the grant income, receipt is probable, and its amount can be measured reliably.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.21 Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty**

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

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

*Actuarial valuations for Local Government Pension Scheme*

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost/(income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 23, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. For example, a 0.1% increase in discount rate would decrease the liability by £111k and a 0.1% increase in inflation would increase the liability by £112k. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2022. 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.

The estimates and assumptions that have a lower risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

*Unfunded pension obligations*

The Charitable Company has also made provision for unfunded pension obligations. The key assumptions made in computing this provision comprise mortality assumptions and discount rates, with the total obligation arising as a result having been disclosed in note 23. Any changes in these assumptions would impact the carrying amount of the liability.

*Depreciation of tangible fixed assets*

Depreciation is computed based on the best estimate of the useful economic lives of the relevant assets and their ultimate residual value.

*Provision for bad debts*

An allowance for doubtful debts is maintained for estimated losses resulting from the inability of the Charitable Company's fee debtors to make required payments. The Charitable Company applies a policy for providing for bad debts which is periodically reviewed based on an assessment of actual outcomes against those expected.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.22 Exceptional items**

Costs classified as exceptional relate to costs which are non-recurring and outside of the normal charitable activities of the company as disclosed in note 9.

**2. School fees receivable and catering income**

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Gross fee income receivable	<b>114,723</b>	<i>109,949</i>
Scholarships, bursaries and reduced fees	<b>(9,945)</b>	<i>(12,357)</i>
Catering income	<b>1,953</b>	<i>1,166</i>
<b>Net fee income receivable</b>	<b>106,731</b>	<i>98,758</i>

In 2022, of the total school fees receivable and catering income, £106,731k (2021: £98,758k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2021: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**3. Other educational related income**

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Support services to other schools and academies	<b>13,209</b>	<i>13,091</i>
Income from Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	<b>8</b>	<i>2,493</i>
Early years funding	<b>1,038</b>	<i>988</i>
Pupil registration fees	<b>331</b>	<i>284</i>
Charges for additional classes	<b>1,112</b>	<i>1,050</i>
Charges for school trips	<b>2,817</b>	<i>1,625</i>
Other school income	<b>1,299</b>	<i>877</i>
Rents and lettings	<b>444</b>	<i>378</i>
	<b>20,258</b>	<i>20,786</i>

In 2022, of the other educational related income, £20,258k (2021: £20,786k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2021: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**4. Voluntary income**

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Other sponsorship and donations received	<b>2,874</b>	<i>1,925</i>
Gift aid from subsidiary undertakings	<b>468</b>	<i>492</i>
Gift aid - COVID-19 donations	<b>1</b>	<i>-</i>
	<b>3,343</b>	<i>2,417</i>
	<b>3,343</b>	<i>2,417</i>

In 2022, of the total voluntary income, £3,343k (2021: £2,417k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2021: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**5. Analysis of total resources expended**

	Staff costs 2022 £000	Other costs 2022 £000	Depreciation 2022 £000	Total 2022 £000	Total 2021 £000
<b>Schools operating costs</b>					
Educational supplies	65,061	9,208	-	<b>74,269</b>	71,651
Recruitment and support	-	471	-	<b>471</b>	315
Staff development	231	48	-	<b>279</b>	238
Examination fees	-	372	-	<b>372</b>	112
Technology costs	3,160	2,096	-	<b>5,256</b>	5,391
Premises costs	3,775	10,762	-	<b>14,537</b>	14,685
Insurance	-	620	-	<b>620</b>	556
Catering	-	5,830	-	<b>5,830</b>	4,977
Marketing	711	1,280	-	<b>1,991</b>	2,144
Legal and professional	-	1,151	-	<b>1,151</b>	1,136
Other support costs	13,672	2,927	-	<b>16,599</b>	16,017
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	1,634	<b>1,634</b>	1,693
Loss on disposal of operations	-	-	-	-	195
Bank interest and charges	-	556	-	<b>556</b>	485
	<u>86,610</u>	<u>35,321</u>	<u>1,634</u>	<b><u>123,565</u></b>	<u>119,595</u>
<b>Governance costs</b>					
Auditor costs - audit fees	-	53	-	<b>53</b>	52
Company Secretariat costs	277	32	-	<b>309</b>	307
Trustees' meeting and travel	-	2	-	<b>2</b>	1
	<u>86,887</u>	<u>35,408</u>	<u>1,634</u>	<b><u>123,929</u></b>	<u>119,955</u>
<b>Total 2022</b>	<b><u>86,887</u></b>	<b><u>35,408</u></b>	<b><u>1,634</u></b>	<b><u>123,929</u></b>	<b><u>119,955</u></b>
<i>Total 2021</i>	<u>87,020</u>	<u>31,242</u>	<u>1,693</u>	<u>119,955</u>	

In 2022, of the total resources expended, £123,929k (2021: £119,955k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2021: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

Total resources expended include:

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Auditor's remuneration:		
Audit of the charitable company's annual financial statements	<b>53</b>	<i>52</i>
Non-audit services	<b>9</b>	<i>10</i>
Depreciation:		
Tangible fixed assets, owned	<b>1,333</b>	<i>1,400</i>
Amortisation: Intangible fixed assets	<b>301</b>	<i>293</i>
Loss on disposal of operations	<b>-</b>	<i>195</i>
Operating lease rentals	<b>802</b>	<i>1,082</i>
	<b>=====</b>	<i>=====</i>

**6. Net interest**

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Interest payable to Group undertakings	<b>441</b>	<i>376</i>
	<b>=====</b>	<i>=====</i>

**7. Staff costs**

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Wages and salaries	<b>68,830</b>	<i>69,249</i>
Social security costs	<b>7,176</b>	<i>6,662</i>
Other pension costs (note 23)	<b>10,523</b>	<i>10,761</i>
Agency fees	<b>358</b>	<i>348</i>
	<b>=====</b>	<i>=====</i>
	<b>86,887</b>	<i>87,020</i>
	<b>=====</b>	<i>=====</i>

During the year, there were redundancy or termination payments made which amounted to £231k (2021: £735k).

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

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>No.</b>	<i>No.</i>
	<b>2,241</b>	<i>2,408</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**7. Staff costs (continued)**

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

	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>No.</b>	No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	<b>75</b>	62
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	<b>32</b>	25
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	<b>9</b>	8
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	<b>7</b>	11
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	<b>4</b>	5
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	<b>5</b>	4
In the band £120,001 - £130,000	<b>3</b>	4
In the band £130,001 - £140,000	<b>5</b>	5
In the band £140,001 - £150,000	<b>3</b>	2
In the band £150,001 - £160,000	<b>1</b>	1
In the band £160,001 - £170,000	-	1
In the band £170,001 - £180,000	<b>1</b>	2
In the band £180,001 - £190,000	<b>2</b>	1
In the band £190,001 - £200,000	<b>4</b>	2
In the band £240,001 - £250,000	-	1
In the band £250,001 - £260,000	<b>1</b>	1

Key management personnel, as listed on page 1, are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity. The remuneration for these individuals totalled £1,363k (2021: £1,383k).

During the year, the following amounts were paid in respect of higher paid employees as shown above:

	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Pension contributions to defined contribution, teachers' pension scheme and local government pension schemes	<b>2,209</b>	1,926

During the year, 37 higher paid employees (2021: 32) participated in defined contribution schemes, 106 (2021: 93) participated in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (operated by the Teachers' Pension Agency), 2 (2021: 2) participated in the Local Government Pension Scheme and 7 (2021: 8) did not participate in Charitable Company pension schemes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**Payment to Trustees**

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2021 - £NIL).

No Trustee, or person with a family or business connection with a Trustee, received remuneration in the year, directly or indirectly, from either the Charitable Company or a company controlled by the Charitable Company.

Expense reimbursements paid to 3 (2021: 1) Trustees during the year amounted to £2k (2021: £1k) and all related to travel and subsistence costs.

**8. Interest on Local Government Pension Scheme**

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Interest on pension scheme liabilities	<b>(163)</b>	<i>(158)</i>
Interest income on pension scheme assets	<b>142</b>	<i>127</i>
	<b>(21)</b>	<i>(31)</i>
	<b>(21)</b>	<i>(31)</i>

**9. Exceptional items**

Exceptional costs incurred in school closures, mergers, acquisitions and disposals and in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak during the year ended 31 August 2022 amounted to £798k (2021: £522k).

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**10. Intangible assets**

	<b>Software development £000</b>
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 September 2021	2,995
At 31 August 2022	2,995
<b>Amortisation</b>	
At 1 September 2021	639
Charge for the year	301
At 31 August 2022	940
<b>Net book value</b>	
At 31 August 2022	2,055
<i>At 31 August 2021</i>	2,356

All intangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**11. Tangible fixed assets**

	Long-term leasehold property £000	Fixtures and fittings £000	Computer equipment £000	Motor vehicles £000	Total £000
<b>Cost</b>					
At 1 September 2021	2,108	11,567	4,613	712	19,000
Additions	63	2,217	282	23	2,585
At 31 August 2022	2,171	13,784	4,895	735	21,585
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 September 2021	841	7,441	4,259	579	13,120
Charge for the year	34	934	306	59	1,333
At 31 August 2022	875	8,375	4,565	638	14,453
<b>Net book value</b>					
At 31 August 2022	1,296	5,409	330	97	7,132
At 31 August 2021	1,267	4,126	354	133	5,880

All tangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**12. Fixed asset investments**

		<b>Listed investments £000</b>
<b>Valuation</b>		
At 1 September 2021		<b>219</b>
Fair value adjustments		<b>(3)</b>
At 31 August 2022		<u><b>216</b></u>
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Investments at value comprise:</b>		
Listed investments	<u><b>216</b></u>	<u><b>219</b></u>

All the fixed asset investments are held in the UK.

**Subsidiary undertakings**

At 31 August 2022, the Charitable Company held more than 20% of the following:

	<b>Holding</b>	<b>Nature of the business</b>	<b>Class of share capital held</b>
	%		
St. Ives (Haslemere) Limited*	100	Dormant	-
United Learning Trust*	100	Education	-
Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited*	100	Dormant	-

\*Limited by guarantee

The registered office address of St. Ives (Haslemere) Limited, United Learning Trust and Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited is Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, England, PE3 6SB.

**13. Stocks**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Finished goods and goods for resale	<u><b>5</b></u>	<u><b>8</b></u>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**14. Debtors**

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Trade debtors	<b>31,330</b>	29,492
Amounts owed by Group undertakings	<b>24,508</b>	24,290
Other debtors	<b>1,001</b>	882
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>2,279</b>	2,347
	<u><b>59,118</b></u>	<u>57,011</u>

**15. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Trade creditors	<b>2,481</b>	3,250
Amounts owed to Group undertakings	<b>6</b>	6
Other taxation and social security	<b>1,873</b>	1,865
Other creditors	<b>12,933</b>	11,867
Accruals and deferred income	<b>41,265</b>	37,708
	<u><b>58,558</b></u>	<u>54,696</u>

Amounts owed to Group undertakings are unsecured, interest free and repayable on demand.

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Deferred income at 1 September 2021	<b>34,594</b>	33,100
Resources deferred during the year	<b>38,049</b>	34,594
Amounts released from previous periods	<b>(34,594)</b>	(33,100)
<b>Deferred income as at 31 August 2022</b>	<u><b>38,049</b></u>	<u>34,594</u>

Deferred income relates to fees invoiced in advance for the Autumn term.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**16. Statement of funds**

**Statement of funds - current year**

	Balance at 1 September 2021 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2022 £000
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
<b>Designated funds</b>						
Designated Funds	2,894	(322)	47	40	-	2,659
<b>General funds</b>						
General Funds - all funds	17,937	130,654	(123,998)	(40)	3	24,556
Pension reserve	(2,212)	-	22	-	1,065	(1,125)
	15,725	130,654	(123,976)	(40)	1,068	23,431
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>18,619</b>	<b>130,332</b>	<b>(123,929)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,068</b>	<b>26,090</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>						
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	720	-	-	-	(6)	714
	2,449	-	-	-	(6)	2,443
<b>Total of funds</b>	<b>21,068</b>	<b>130,332</b>	<b>(123,929)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,062</b>	<b>28,533</b>

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**16. Statement of funds (continued)**

Designated funds are accumulated surpluses from prior years available for use by the School that generated the funds. In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the Charitable Company transferred £4 million of general funds to designated funds during 2020 to be used in support of those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

The Sponsorship fund has been formed to gather together the external donations received towards the Charitable Company's support for the academies of United Learning Trust.

Other donated funds include a number of individual donations towards specific building and other projects within the Group.

The transfer from general funds to designated funds represents a designation to the Arnold Development Fund which is available for the benefit of the AKS school.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**16. Statement of funds (continued)**

**Statement of funds - prior year**

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2020 £000</i>	<i>Income £000</i>	<i>Expenditure £000</i>	<i>Gains/ (losses) £000</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2021 £000</i>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Designated funds	3,747	(961)	108	-	2,894
<b>General funds</b>					
General Funds - all funds	15,085	122,922	(120,072)	2	17,937
Pension reserve	(2,640)	-	9	419	(2,212)
	<u>12,445</u>	<u>122,922</u>	<u>(120,063)</u>	<u>421</u>	<u>15,725</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>16,192</u>	<u>121,961</u>	<u>(119,955)</u>	<u>421</u>	<u>18,619</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	720	-	-	-	720
	<u>2,449</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,449</u>
<b>Total of funds</b>	<u><u>18,641</u></u>	<u><u>121,961</u></u>	<u><u>(119,955)</u></u>	<u><u>421</u></u>	<u><u>21,068</u></u>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**17. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current year**

	<b>Restricted funds 2022 £000</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds 2022 £000</b>	<b>Total funds 2022 £000</b>
Tangible fixed assets	-	7,132	<b>7,132</b>
Intangible fixed assets	-	2,055	<b>2,055</b>
Fixed asset investments	-	216	<b>216</b>
Current assets	2,443	76,370	<b>78,813</b>
Creditors due within one year	-	(58,558)	<b>(58,558)</b>
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(1,125)	<b>(1,125)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,443</b>	<b>26,090</b>	<b>28,533</b>

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year**

	<i>Restricted funds 2021 £000</i>	<i>Unrestricted funds 2021 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2021 £000</i>
Tangible fixed assets	-	5,880	5,880
Intangible fixed assets	-	2,356	2,356
Fixed asset investments	-	219	219
Current assets	2,449	67,072	69,521
Creditors due within one year	-	(54,696)	(54,696)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(2,212)	(2,212)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,449</b>	<b>18,619</b>	<b>21,068</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**18. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities**

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	<b>6,400</b>	<i>2,008</i>
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation and amortisation charges	<b>1,634</b>	<i>1,693</i>
Interest paid	<b>462</b>	<i>407</i>
Decrease in stocks	<b>3</b>	<i>5</i>
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	<b>(2,107)</b>	<i>1,404</i>
Increase in creditors	<b>3,862</b>	<i>1,290</i>
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	<b>-</b>	<i>195</i>
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	<b>(43)</b>	<i>(40)</i>
Revaluation of fixed asset investments	<b>3</b>	<i>(2)</i>
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>10,214</b>	<i>6,960</i>

**19. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents**

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Cash in hand	<b>19,690</b>	<i>12,502</i>

**20. Analysis of changes in net debt**

	<b>At 1 September 2021</b>	<b>Cash flows</b>	<b>At 31 August 2022</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	<b>12,502</b>	<b>7,188</b>	<b>19,690</b>

**21. Contingent liabilities**

At 31 August 2022, the Charitable Company was party to cross-guarantees on bank loans and overdrafts of the parent undertaking totalling £11,581k (2021: £18,845k).

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**22. Capital commitments**

There were no capital commitments at 31 August 2022 or 31 August 2021.

**23. Pension commitments**

The Charitable Company operates defined contribution schemes for the benefit of its employees. The assets of the schemes are managed and held externally on behalf of the scheme members in funds independent from those of the Charitable Company. Employer contributions payable to the schemes during the year amounted to £1.389m (2021: £1.317m). Employee and employer contributions payable to the schemes at the Balance Sheet date amounted to £167k (2021: £175k) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company operates two defined benefit pension scheme: the Teachers' Pension Scheme for England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff, and the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff of one school, which is managed by the Local Authority.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2016 and of the LGPS 31 March 2019.

Contributions amounting to £1,072k were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2022 (2021 - £1,045k) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company also has an unfunded defined benefit pension scheme which is provided for in the financial statements.

Provisions for unfunded pensions included within the total defined benefit pension scheme liability amounted to £1,125k (2021: £1,005k). The current service cost amounted to £Nil (2021: £Nil) and actuarial losses recognised through other comprehensive income amounted to £234k (2021: £252k). Benefits paid during the year amounted to £114k (2021: £108k).

The current mortality assumptions in respect of unfunded pensions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on the retirement age of 65 are between 19-21 years. The discount rate applied in calculating the obligation is 4.30%, with future pension increase and inflation being 12.3%.

**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. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment.

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

**Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme**

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

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

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

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

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

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £8.998m (2021 - £9.008m).

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 Charitable Company has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Charitable Company has set out above the information available on the scheme.

**Local Government Pension Scheme**

The Charitable Company is one of several employing bodies included within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee administered funds. Contributions to the scheme are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of triennial valuations using the projected unit method.

The total employer's contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2022 was £55k (2021: £59k). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 17.9 - 18.7 per cent for employers and 5.5 - 9.9 per cent for employees.

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Balance sheet date (expressed as weighted averages):

	<b>At 31 August 2022</b>	<i>At 31 August 2021</i>
	%	%
Discount rate	<b>4.30</b>	1.70
Future salary increases	<b>4.40</b>	4.20
Future pension increases	<b>3.00</b>	2.80
Inflation assumption	<b>2.90</b>	2.70

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

	<b>2021</b>	2020
Mortality rates (in years)		
- for a male aged 65 now	<b>22.3</b>	22.4
- at 65 for a male aged 45 now	<b>23.7</b>	23.9
- for a female aged 65 now	<b>25.0</b>	25.1
- at 65 for a female aged 45 now	<b>26.8</b>	26.9

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

	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Equities	<b>4,225</b>	4,271
Bonds	<b>394</b>	448
Property	<b>976</b>	845
Cash	<b>143</b>	177
Other	<b>3,214</b>	2,715
<b>Total market value of LGPS assets</b>	<b>8,952</b>	8,456

The actual return on scheme assets was £633k (2021 - £1,050k).

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities are as follows (for both the LGPS and unfunded pension scheme):

	<b>2022</b>	2021
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Current service cost	<b>(124)</b>	(124)
Interest cost	<b>(163)</b>	(158)
Interest income	<b>142</b>	127
Administrative expenses	<b>(2)</b>	(3)
<b>Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities</b>	<b>(147)</b>	(158)

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

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

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening defined benefit obligation	<b>10,668</b>	<i>10,269</i>
Current service cost	<b>124</b>	<i>124</i>
Interest cost	<b>163</b>	<i>158</i>
Contributions by scheme participants	<b>20</b>	<i>21</i>
Actuarial losses	<b>(574)</b>	<i>504</i>
Benefits paid - LGPS	<b>(210)</b>	<i>(300)</i>
Benefits paid - unfunded obligation	<b>(114)</b>	<i>(108)</i>
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>10,077</b>	<i>10,668</i>

Movements in the fair value of the Company's share of scheme assets were as follows:

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening fair value of scheme assets	<b>8,456</b>	<i>7,629</i>
Interest on assets	<b>142</b>	<i>127</i>
Actual return less interest	<b>491</b>	<i>923</i>
Contributions by employer	<b>55</b>	<i>59</i>
Contributions by scheme participants	<b>20</b>	<i>21</i>
Benefits paid	<b>(210)</b>	<i>(300)</i>
Administration expenses	<b>(2)</b>	<i>(3)</i>
<b>Closing fair value of scheme assets</b>	<b>8,952</b>	<i>8,456</i>

The Charitable Company expects to contribute £55k to the LGPS in 2023.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

Amounts for the current and previous period are as follows:

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Defined benefit pension schemes</b>		
Defined benefit obligations (including unfunded pension deficit)	<b>(10,077)</b>	<i>(10,668)</i>
LGPS assets	<b>8,952</b>	<i>8,456</i>
<b>Net deficit</b>	<b>(1,125)</b>	<i>(2,212)</i>
Experience adjustments on LGPS and unfunded liabilities	<b>574</b>	<i>(504)</i>
Experience adjustments on LGPS assets	<b>491</b>	<i>923</i>
	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
LGPS net deficit	<b>-</b>	<i>1,207</i>
Unfunded pension scheme liability	<b>1,125</b>	<i>1,005</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,125</b>	<i>2,212</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

**24. Operating lease commitments**

At 31 August 2022 the Company had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Land and buildings</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>240</b>	<i>178</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>873</b>	<i>533</i>
After more than 5 years	<b>578</b>	<i>49</i>
	<u><b>1,691</b></u>	<u><i>760</i></u>
	<b>2022</b>	<i>2021</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Other</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>1,084</b>	<i>802</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>782</b>	<i>767</i>
After more than 5 years	<b>3</b>	<i>-</i>
	<u><b>1,869</b></u>	<u><i>1,569</i></u>

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022**

---

**25. Related party transactions**

United Church Schools Foundation Limited (UCSF) is the sole member of United Church School Trust (UCST).

During the year, UCSF charged interest totalling £442k (2021: £376k) and rent totalling £1,787k (2021: £1,987k) to the Charitable Company.

UCST is the sole member of United Learning Trust (ULT).

The Charitable Company provided central services to ULT. The total amount charged during the year totalled £12,557k (2021: £12,454k) and was computed so as to equal the actual costs incurred on a per pupil basis.

At the year end date, balances amounting to £24,508k (2021: £24,290k) were due to the Charitable Company, and balances amounting to £6k (2021: £6k) were due from the Charitable Company to other entities in the Charitable Group of which UCSF is the ultimate parent. These balances arise as a result of direct recharges of costs where resources are centrally procured, with the underlying transactions not therefore representing related party transactions.

There have been no other transactions with related parties that require disclosure under either FRS 102 or Charities SORP (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

**26. Post balance sheet events**

Bank loans of the parent undertaking, to which the Charitable Company is party to cross-guarantees, which were due to mature in October 2023, have been re-negotiated since the balance sheet date and mature in February 2026.

**27. Ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party**

The Board considers that the ultimate and immediate parent undertaking of the Charitable Company is United Church Schools Foundation Limited (Company number: 00018582) by virtue of the fact that it is the sole member and therefore has the ability to appoint or remove trustees. The principal objects of United Church Schools Foundation Limited are the same as those of the Charitable Company.

In the opinion of the Directors, there is no ultimate controlling party.

The largest group of undertakings for which group accounts have been drawn up is that headed by United Church Schools Foundation Limited. Copies of the group accounts can be obtained from Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, PE3 6SB.

**United Church Schools Trust**

England & Wales - Charity number 1016538

---

# Accounts

---

Registered number: 02780748  
Charity number: 1016538

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**CONTENTS**

---

	Page
<b>Reference and administrative details of the Company, its Trustees and advisers</b>	1 - 2
<b>Trustees' report</b>	3 - 24
<b>Independent auditor's report on the financial statements</b>	25 - 29
<b>Statement of financial activities</b>	30 - 31
<b>Balance sheet</b>	32 - 33
<b>Statement of cash flows</b>	34
<b>Notes to the financial statements</b>	35 - 62

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**Trustees** Ms Mary Curnock Cook (resigned 30 April 2021)  
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall  
Mr Ben Gordon  
Mr Richard Greenhalgh  
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson, Chair  
Mr Mike Litchfield  
Mrs Sarah Squire (resigned 31 August 2021)

Biographies for Trustees can be found at [www.unitedlearning.org.uk](http://www.unitedlearning.org.uk)

**Company registered number** 02780748

**Charity registered number** 1016538

**Registered office** Worldwide House  
Thorpe Wood  
Peterborough  
PE3 6SB

**Company secretary** Mrs Alison Hussain

**Chief executive officer** Sir Jon Coles

**Senior management team** Sir Jon Coles, Chief Executive Officer  
Dame Sally Coates, Director of Secondary Education  
Mr Darran Ellison-Lee, Director of Primary Education  
Mrs Louise Johnston, Chief Financial Officer  
Mr Dominic Norrish, Chief Operating Officer  
Ms Anna Paige, Director of Strategy and Performance

**Independent auditor** Grant Thornton UK LLP  
Statutory Auditor  
Victoria House  
199 Avebury Boulevard  
Milton Keynes  
MK9 1AU

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS**  
**(CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**Bankers**                      Barclays Bank PLC  
One Snowhill  
Snowhill Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6GN

**Solicitors**                    HCR Hewitsons LLP  
Elgin House  
Billing Road  
Northampton  
NN1 5BA

Stone King LLP  
3rd Floor  
Bateman House  
82-88 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB2 1LQ

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) (the Charitable Company) for the year ended 31 August 2021. The Trustees confirm that the Trustees' Report and financial statements of the Charitable Company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Charitable Company's governing document and the provisions of 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 (FRS102) ("SORP 2019").

### **Constitution and objects**

The United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) is registered with the Charity Commission (No. 1016538) and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales), governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended in 2004. The Charitable Company is established for charitable purposes and in accordance with its Memorandum of Association its principal activity is to provide a liberal, practical and general education for children which includes religious instruction in the doctrine and duties of Christianity.

### **Members of the Board (hereafter called "Trustees")**

The present membership of the Board is set out under Reference and Administrative Details. All Trustees served throughout the year except where indicated.

Each member of the Board of Trustees holds one share in United Church Schools Foundation Ltd ("UCSF"), the ultimate parent undertaking.

### **Appointment of Trustees**

The Board has the power to appoint any person as an additional Trustee or to fill a casual vacancy. A Trustee holds office for three years, after which they must resign. They may remain in office for a further three years with the consent of the Board. Following this, they shall be eligible for re-election annually upon the proposal of the Chair.

The training and induction provided for new Trustees is dependent upon their existing experience. Where necessary, induction will provide training on charity, educational, legal and financial matters. All new Trustees are given tours of the United Learning Group's ("the Group") schools and academies and the chance to meet with staff and students. They are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role as Trustees. Induction is tailored specifically to the individual. The Company Secretary works with the Trustees to identify training needs and steps to keep the Trustees updated regarding the regulatory environment.

## **Strategic report**

### **Strategies and activities**

The principal object of the Charitable Company is set out above.

Founded in 1883 as an educational charity anchored in the Church of England, the Charitable Company manages the operation of a group of Independent Schools to provide education for students of different abilities between the ages of 0 and 18. Its admission policies welcome people from all employment, faiths and backgrounds. In 2001, it created a subsidiary charity, United Learning Trust ("ULT") a multi-academy trust, to extend its work into some of the most challenging inner-city areas through the City Academy programme, and to this day the Charitable Company remains the sponsor of ULT.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

### **About United Learning**

The overall aim of the Charitable Group is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools which enable all young people to make a success of their lives. The roots of our charity can be traced back nearly 140 years, and over this period, we have founded and developed a large number of schools, focused on the most important social and educational challenges of the day.

Our strength as a group of schools lies in the unique collaboration between the state and independent sectors, in our national reach and growing regional clusters and in our dedication to continuous improvement, to developing each pupil's whole character and our pursuit of excellence. Our track record in some of the country's most challenging schools is based on structures and systems which ensure high expectations, rigour, enthusiasm and breadth.

As of 31 August 2021, United Learning – the trading name of the Charitable Group – comprises 13 independent schools operated within United Church Schools Trust ("UCST"), 76 state sector academies operated within ULT and a central office function that serves all our schools.

### **Operating review**

#### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

As in 2020, this academic year was overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic which presented significant disruption to pupils of all ages across the country throughout the year.

Following guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), schools were organised into 'bubbles' – usually whole year groups – and robust hygiene, cleaning and social distancing arrangements were put in place across all United Learning schools. Whilst adhering to the latest advice and guidance from both the DfE and Public Health England (PHE) at all times, our schools sought to provide pupils with a well-rounded school experience – with a specific focus, where possible, on catching up the time missed during the closure of schools the previous academic year and minimising the disruption caused by further outbreaks. A key priority was to protect the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff and support the government's efforts to stop the spread of the virus.

As cases of COVID-19 rose through the autumn and into the winter, a number of schools were required to send home the close contacts of anyone within the school community who had tested positive for the virus. In doing so, our schools always acted on the advice and guidance of PHE. Remote learning was provided for all pupils who were learning at home and the schools sought to involve these pupils in all areas of school life as much as possible. In some cases, schools operated a hybrid model with some pupils learning in the classroom and others joining lessons remotely.

At the beginning of January 2021, the Government announced the closure of all schools for face-to-face learning. During this period, which lasted until 8 March 2021, our schools offered extensive remote learning programmes so pupils could continue to learn from home. Our schools remained open for children of key workers and those deemed to be vulnerable with up to 570 children attending our schools each day.

Throughout this period, the Charitable Company continued to utilise the £4 million Hardship Fund set up during the first lockdown in 2020 to support those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic. We also waived fees for boarding and nurseries, and introduced reductions of 15% for Reception, 12.5% for Years 1 and 2 and 5% for all other year groups.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

To determine staff views around the Group's response to the pandemic, we conducted a full staff survey at the end of June. This polling showed that school staff felt that the Group's response to COVID-19 either greatly exceeded (46%), exceeded (40%) or matched (14%) what was being done by other local schools. Moreover, 91% of school staff either agreed or strongly agreed that the steps taken by the Group had been effective in ensuring that children were able to carry on learning despite the very significant challenges.

Important steps were taken to safeguard the wellbeing of pupils and staff during this period. This was managed at a local level with schools responding to the pupils directly and within their own local contexts. Key actions included:

- Working with multi-agencies to agree programmes of contact for specific pupils.
- Offering face-to-face school places during Lockdown to vulnerable children.
- Arranging for individual pupils to receive one-to-one or small group support remotely.
- Maintaining online registers for remote learning and making telephone calls and/or home visits where necessary.
- Running online sessions to promote wellbeing.

For staff, we continued to update the dedicated Coronavirus and Your Wellbeing page on the United Hub with useful guidance on homeworking as well as advice on keeping active. In addition, we set up a dedicated Heads Wellbeing page on the Hub and we created a Peer Mentoring Circle to support Heads over the academic year.

A number of wellbeing focused webinars were delivered over the course of the year by our Employee Assistance Programme provider, CiC. Sessions covered Winter Wellbeing and Mental Health Awareness. We also ran Wellbeing and Resilience Sessions for our HR and Finance Teams.

Further detail about the impact of COVID-19 is provided in the relevant sections of the Directors' report.

### **Framework for Excellence**

Our 'Framework for Excellence' sets out the principles of an excellent education that we follow as a Group.

#### **'The best from everyone'**

Our aim is to bring out the best in everyone. So we must expect the best from everyone, all the time. Every child is a special individual, capable of extraordinary things. We expect unreasonably – we constantly challenge children to do what they think they can't, to persist, to work hard and to be at their best.

From every adult we expect the same: that they are at their best, expect unreasonably of themselves, are determined and resilient and pass those expectations on to the children in all they do. We act with the utmost love, care and good faith – the highest standards come with the greatest attention to the wellbeing of all.

### **Powerful Knowledge**

Over the last five years we have developed a common curriculum which seeks to empower pupils to understand and shape the world around them. It covers English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, RE, French, Spanish, Music and Sport. There is a greater emphasis on English and Maths in our primary schools, but we also seek to develop our younger pupils as geographers, historians, artists, musicians, and athletes.

In each subject, the curriculum provides a coherent programme of study which develops knowledge and skills term by term and year by year. The curriculum puts teachers in the driving seat; by planning lessons centrally, we enable teachers to plan lessons locally, playing to their own strengths and adapting materials for their local context and the needs of their pupils.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

Across the Group, the Rosenshine Principles are used to underpin all our work in teaching and learning to support personal development, continuous professional development, work scrutiny, lesson observation, leadership and curriculum development, Schemes of Learning and policies as well as learning planning.

The Rosenshine Principles aim to minimise the use of working memory and to work with long-term memory to embed learning. They are firmly based on research which shows how the brain acquires and uses new information as well as research into successful classroom practice.

### ***Learning during Lockdown***

Whilst the majority of pupils could not physically attend schools during the Lockdown period, their learning continued remotely, and our schools sought to deliver a full curriculum through live online lessons, recorded lessons and work packs and learning resources available on our group website and intranet United Hub.

Our independent schools were fully prepared to deliver full remote learning provision in January 2021, having made further improvements from lessons learnt during the first Lockdown in Spring 2020 and hybrid learning from the Autumn Term. Pupils followed their normal timetables which included morning and afternoon form times and whole school assemblies. For boarding pupils who were abroad and living in different time zones, schools recorded lessons so that they could access lessons at a convenient time. Lessons were delivered as close to 'normal' as possible with opportunities for teachers to check pupils' understanding. Wherever possible, extracurricular clubs (e.g. choir and debating) continued remotely and some schools even held concerts. Pupil engagement was high with on average 90-95% of pupils logging into lessons each day.

### ***Academic Performance***

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, GCSE and A Level examinations were cancelled for the second year running. Despite our, and others', warnings to Ofqual about the risks of the process that they attempted to put in place, results were ultimately based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). Staff calculated TAGs based on a comprehensive range of evidence including mock grades, past coursework and classroom learning.

The TAGs received robust scrutiny from middle and senior leaders within our schools and across our cluster system to create the most accurate grades possible for what each pupil was likely to have received had they sat external exams. The TAGs enabled pupils to receive their individual grades so they could progress on to further and higher education. In most cases, Sixth Formers were able to progress on to their first choice university which included Russell Group universities and Oxbridge. Likewise, all our schools endeavoured to provide places to pupils staying on for their school's Sixth Form. Pupils were also able to secure places at other Sixth Form Colleges and go into further training and apprenticeship courses.

As in the year before, due to the pandemic, national Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments for primary pupils were also cancelled.

ISI did not undertake any graded inspections during the academic year.

### ***Education with Character***

We value an education in which development of character is as important as exam success. Our schools, therefore, all have a clear pathway to promote leadership, service to others, working independently and in teams, compassion, and courage. We want pupils to look back on their schooling as a time of enjoyment and happiness which has inspired and challenged them in equal measure and prepared them for the ups and downs of life.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

All our schools are expected to have excellent co-curricular programmes which are systematically monitored to ensure equality of education for every child. The nationally recognised Aspirations Programme plays a key part in many of our schools and the development of careers education is a Group priority. We emphasise links with the community and opportunities for voluntary and other service activities.

Destinations are as much a part of the 'outcomes' we seek for our pupils as exam grades. We expect schools to have clear programmes of careers advice and guidance, with the greatest support going to the pupils with the greatest need. Pupils' careers are their future, and we expect schools to systematically track and monitor this to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

Music, sport and the arts are key components of a United Learning curriculum and co-curricular programme. We have Trust-wide networks in these areas and our subject advisers lead and share best practice throughout the Trust. We believe in the transformative power of creativity and want all our pupils to be exposed to cultural events beyond their immediate experience.

Whilst the pandemic made it more challenging to deliver an extensive enrichment programme, our schools continued to provide as many opportunities as possible to broaden our pupils' horizons and introduce them to new experiences. This included virtual speakers and trips as well as the annual International Art Competition, the StorySLAM creative writing competition and the launch of Green Love – an original music project open to all of the Group's primary schools.

### **Continuous Improvement**

Collaboration is at the heart of our work with all our schools. However good we are, we can always be better. We believe United Learning is unique in enabling us to share widely across the whole country, across primary and secondary phases, and across state and independent institutions. This means we are always learning from each other as well as visiting leading-edge schools and trusts from outside the Group. We constantly strive to be better; we steal with pride and endeavour always to give the children in our schools the best possible opportunities. High levels of attainment and progress are expected in every United Learning school.

Centrally, school improvement is delivered through termly meetings with each Head and Chair of Governors.

We provide visits and immersion opportunities for all Heads and senior leaders in Trust schools. Termly network meetings for all Heads of Department are led by subject advisers and provide valuable and timely leadership support. Trust-wide conferences cover a variety of topics such as teaching and learning, strategy, governance and financial management. Heads regularly meet their colleagues and there is a collegial culture with everyone happy and willing to support others.

We have a team dedicated to continuous professional development who plan and deliver central programmes and conferences, and who quality assure Career Professional Development in all our schools. This begins with our annual Best in Everyone conference which introduces new staff to the Group. This was held virtually over a three day period with nearly 400 people in attendance.

Our annual surveys for pupils, parents and staff provide robust feedback on our progress towards our goals. They enable us to identify schools in need of support, and schools able to provide it. Headline findings from across the schools include:

#### **At Prep:**

- 98% of pupils said they were proud of their school.
- 97% of pupils said they get on well with the adults in their school.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

At Secondary:

- 95% of pupils agreed that the adults in their school expect them to be successful.
- 89% of pupils said they can be successful in school and life.

### **Outstanding People and Leadership**

#### **Successful Staff Engagement**

Our staff survey found that our Overall Employee Engagement score (defined by Ipsos Mori as “an employee’s willingness to put discretionary effort into their work in the form of time, thought and energy”) was 79% - higher than any other year.

Key findings of our staff survey include:

- 90% of staff said they were proud to work in their school/department.
- 87% of staff said they valued their school’s culture.
- 85% of staff said they support their school’s strategy and direction.

#### **Leadership in Every Role**

Every adult in the school is a leader. In every word, tone and gesture, they set the direction and expectation. United Learning expects every adult to take responsibility and the initiative to do what is right for the pupils. All those in formal leadership positions create the climate and culture in which others work. They demand the highest standards, build a performance culture, develop their teams, and create the space for others to lead. All leaders listen, grow relationships, act with integrity and care and expect the best from themselves and others in building a successful, happy, and confident school.

We aim to give all aspiring and current leaders the opportunity to develop all aspects of their leadership. In addition to the school offer, United Learning has a range of group-wide leadership development opportunities. We hope that by giving access to the best role models and training from within the Group, colleagues will have a range of opportunities to reflect and grow as leaders.

In 2020/21, we continued to run National Professional Qualifications within clusters in partnership with the UCL Institute of Education. The programmes from 2019/20 were extended further into 2020/21 due to continued school closures and other pandemic related interruptions throughout the year; this group are therefore expected to complete in Autumn 2021.

In Autumn 2020, the DfE announced NPQs would be undergoing a reform. As a result, we saw a lower uptake in the current NPQ offer; 46 for middle leadership and 37 for senior leadership.

In December, 31 colleagues graduated from our internal Aspiring to Headship programme and 50 colleagues graduated from our internal Senior Leadership programme. In January we commenced cohort 2 of these programmes and launched our internal Middle Leadership programme. In addition, we applied content for primary across all three programmes, making them accessible for all phases and both sectors. These are non-accredited, free, flexible, webinar-based, modular courses for talented, aspiring and recently appointed leaders. Designed to develop and accelerate our most talented leaders, the programmes, which run from January to December, bring together leadership expertise, theory and practice within an educational context. This year, 33 colleagues are participating on the Aspiring to Headship programme, 63 on the Senior Leadership Programme, and 84 on the Middle Leadership programme.

Both sets of programmes show our commitment to staff becoming highly effective leaders; building the skills, confidence and knowledge to drive successful team performance and improve the education experience for children and young people.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

Pupil leadership is equally important, and we want pupils to be given opportunities to take responsibility and initiative. Opportunities to lead in school and across the Trust are extensive, with leadership opportunities for every child, in every year.

### **United Teaching**

Our Initial Teacher Training Scheme, United Teaching continued to move forward strongly. During 2020/21, we recruited 185 people to train to teach with United Teaching. 100% of trainees 'passed' and were recommended for Qualified Teaching Status. Ahead of the 2021/22 academic year, a further 192 trainee teachers were recruited and attended our Summer Institutes in July and August.

In February, the Department for Education announced that several United Learning Trust academies would join its national network of teaching school hubs from September 2021. Building on its long and successful track record as a school-centred initial teacher training provider, Paddington Academy was announced as a teaching school hub for the Northwest London area whilst Glenmoor Academy, working with Swindon Academy, was named as the teaching school hub for Swindon and parts of Wiltshire. Parkside Community College was named as one of the partners in the Cambridge Teaching Schools consortium hub.

### **Inclusion, Diversity and Equality**

The Group continued to focus on creating a much more diverse and inclusive workforce. Key initiatives over the year included:

- Changes to recruitment processes including applying the Rooney rule to a number of vacancies across central office and schools; this has led to applications from candidates from a wider range of backgrounds;
- Signing up to the Race at Work Charter and following the five calls to action to ensure ethnic minority employees are represented at all levels within the Group;
- Holding an Ethnic Minority Leadership Conference in June 2021 for middle and senior leaders.

During 2020, mentoring was specifically identified by United Learning's minority ethnic colleagues as something that would help to support the progression of talented aspiring and current leaders from a diverse background. In the Spring term, we launched a reverse mentoring programme with the aims of amplifying the voices of our minority ethnic colleagues to senior leaders, facilitating dialogue between people from different backgrounds and energising mentors and mentees to seek out other perspectives. Reverse mentoring differs from traditional mentoring in that the mentee is a more senior colleague than the mentor. The mentoring scheme is supported by workshops throughout the year on how to get the most out of the reverse mentoring relationship. 17 mentoring pairs were recruited to the first cohort to pilot the scheme, which continues into 2021/22. A further 23 colleagues applied to be mentors and have been deferred to the next cohort.

At the beginning of the academic year, we undertook a group-wide curriculum review on diversity and inclusion focusing on race equality following the killing of George Floyd and the subsequent Black Lives Matter movement. As such, the Common Curriculum was updated to better promote diversity and inclusion across all subject areas and give a voice to ethnic minorities as well as groups whose voices have not always been heard.

Alongside this, we ran workshops for staff across our schools to give them the tools and knowledge they need to promote and celebrate diversity within their school communities.

### **Our Group of Schools**

As a result of falling pupil numbers, exacerbated by the pandemic and the financial pressures felt by many families, we took the difficult decision to close PHC Hitchin on 31 August 2021. When the school joined the Charitable Company in 2018, it was on the verge of closure and would have closed then if we had not become involved.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

Despite some initially promising discussions with potential new owners, none of the options proved successful and we announced in February that the school would close at the end of the academic year. We supported all families to find alternative places and helped staff members secure new positions.

### **Going Concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, including full consideration of the impact of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the operations of the Charitable Company again this year. The lockdown restrictions during the 2021 Spring term resulted in all schools moving to remote learning for several weeks, and throughout the year schools had to manage both staff and pupil absence, and both working and studying remotely due to self-isolation requirements. In recognition that pupils did not receive the full experience expected at an Independent school during the lockdown period, a discount was awarded to all pupils for the impacted weeks of the Spring term, resulting in a reduction in income for the year. Further income reductions resulted from lettings and hospitality being cancelled during lockdown. Additional costs were incurred in areas such as property maintenance and cleaning to ensure schools were compliant with DfE COVID-secure guidance. The Charitable Company continued to utilise the £4m COVID-19 Hardship Fund established in 2020 to support those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic. The Charitable Company has been able to largely offset the reduction of income and additional costs through making use of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ("CJRS") and through savings due to lower operating costs during lockdown.

The financial results for the Charitable Company in the current year to date are ahead of budget in terms of operating surplus and cash reserves. The forecast for the remainder of the year shows the operating results are in line with budget, comfortably within our banking facility limits and on track to meet the agreed banking covenants. Various cashflow scenarios have been modelled for the period to 31st August 2023. These models assume that there will be no further lockdowns leading to prolonged school closures and hence no further fee discounts required. The worst-case scenario uses pessimistic assumptions including potential pupil number reductions resulting from high costs of living and reduced international travel, and the model builds in higher levels of inflation and increased costs such as national insurance contributions. However, even in this scenario the Charitable Company is able to make sufficient cost savings to continue to have adequate cash reserves to meet its liabilities as they fall due during the forecast period. In preparing these forecasts, management have considered the different levers available to them, such as the timing of capital expenditure, which can improve working capital at the lower points in the headroom available, notwithstanding that these remain positive throughout. The Charitable Company has available to it a wide range of contingency measures which it could use to reduce costs and/or realise funds should that prove necessary.

Bank loans of the parent undertaking, to which the Charitable Company is party to cross-guarantees, were due to mature in March 2022 and October 2022. The March 2022 maturing loans have been re-negotiated since the balance sheet date and will now mature in February 2025 at the earliest. Potential non-renewal of the facility due to expire in October 2022 has been considered in the worst-case scenario model and sufficient overall headroom still remains throughout the going concern period even without the loan. Management have also considered the impact of the base and worst-case scenarios on debt covenants and concluded that these will not be breached. The headroom in the different cashflow models and the levers available to the Charitable Company have enabled management to conclude that there is no material uncertainty in management's going concern assessment.

Therefore, based on the current financial position and latest forecasts, the robustness of cash flow management and the level of financial reserves available in the cash flow scenarios, the Board of Trustees are confident that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future, being at least twelve months from the date of approval of these financial statements. For this reason, it continues to adopt the

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Accounting Policies.

### **Financial Review**

The total surplus for the year amounted to £2,427k (2020: deficit of £3,211k). Included within these results was an actuarial gain on defined benefit pension schemes and other pension commitments of £419k (2020: loss of £278k).

The schools operated by the Charitable Company during the year were as follows:

AKS  
Ashford School  
Banstead Preparatory School  
Coworth Flexlands School  
Dunottar School  
Embley  
Guildford High School  
Lincoln Minster School  
PHC Hitchin (closed 31 August 2021)  
Rowan Preparatory School  
St. Ives (Haslemere)  
Surbiton High School  
The Royal School  
Tranby (formerly named Hull Collegiate School)

The Charitable Company is a sponsor of ULT which is a subsidiary undertaking of the Charitable Company. ULT's aim is to found and manage academies under the government initiative. Academies opened to date are listed on the United Learning website.

### **Funds**

The value of restricted funds to be utilised in future years includes £720k (2020: £720k) for prize and scholarship funds and other donated funds and £1,729k (2020: £1,729k) for the sponsorship fund. Unrestricted funds amount to £18,619k (2020: £16,192k) including designated funds of £2,894k (2020: £3,747k). The assets are held in pursuance of the Charitable Company's objectives.

### **Plans for future periods**

The Charitable Company aims to continue to increase the number of pupils educated at its schools. This will be through organic growth and through mergers with other schools. The Charitable Company will continue to strive to improve the levels of performance of its students at all levels and will continue its efforts to ensure its prep students are well prepared for their secondary education and its secondary students are able to obtain jobs or a place in higher education, as they choose, once they leave its schools.

### **Funding**

The Trustees are satisfied that the Charitable Company's assets attributable to each of its individual funds are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in relation to those funds.

### **Risk assessments**

During the year under review, the Trustees and senior management have formally identified, and documented, the major risks to which the Charitable Company is exposed. Those risks have been reviewed by the Risk and

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

Audit Committee and risk management strategies have been implemented. Risk management is embedded in the day to day processes of the Charitable Company and its subsidiaries.

Principal risk areas for the Charitable Company are the protection of pupils and employees, and of assets and data. Procedures and governance to minimise these risks are constantly being reviewed and updated.

### **COVID-19 pandemic**

The Charitable Company has considered the live issues and future risks associated with the pandemic as part of the overall risk management framework and whilst enacting our Business Continuity plans at the start of lockdown. Each principal risk has been considered in light of the pandemic and additional mitigating actions and plans included accordingly.

### **Safeguarding**

The Charitable Company has Safeguarding and Child Protection policies in place, which focus on the need to ensure that its pupils are safe, feel safe and are fully supported in this respect by their school. These policies, which are available online, also provide a framework for its schools to develop secure processes for identifying and supporting pupils at risk of abuse. The implementation and effectiveness of these policies and procedures, which adhere to Department for Education guidelines on safeguarding and child protection, are regularly monitored and reviewed. To further mitigate this risk, the Group has a central safeguarding officer.

### **Health and Safety**

The Charitable Company recognises its position as employer and the health and safety duties this entails. Roles and responsibilities across the organisation are defined in the Group Health and Safety Management Policy and subsidiary topic policies exist to communicate and promote the standards expected of all the Charitable Company's schools to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and other nonemployees alike. The implementation of these policies is regularly monitored, and any incidents of significance are investigated with the intention of preventing recurrence.

### **Financial pressures**

The Charitable Company is reliant upon the parents paying its school fees promptly and an economic downturn could have a direct impact on parents' ability to pay their fees. The impact of the COVID-19 lockdown has led to international travel restrictions and therefore boarding numbers may reduce. The political landscape is currently uncertain, Brexit and possible changes in business rate relief rules could have a significant impact on the cost base of the Charitable Company's schools. Senior management and the Trustees therefore aim to keep abreast of COVID-19 restrictions and the economic conditions both in the UK and abroad. Overheads are carefully monitored to ensure that resources are used effectively.

The markets in which the Charitable Company's schools operate are highly competitive. Consequently, the schools constantly review their processes to ensure that their pupils receive a first-class education that helps them to perform to their full ability in all aspects of school life.

A large proportion of the Charitable Company's costs relate to staff salaries, which are relatively fixed each year. There is a risk that a significant drop in revenue or further increases in pension contributions may lead to an inability to cover such costs.

The Charitable Company also belongs to the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS") run by the relevant Local Authority for certain non-teaching staff. This is now a closed scheme relating to one school where employees transferred as part of the conversion from a maintained school. Under the application of FRS 102, the contributions made by the Charitable Company to these funded defined benefit schemes currently results in pension deficits recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities. Under FRS 102, the Charitable Company is

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

required to account for the retirement benefits when it is committed to provide them, even if the actual provision will be many years into the future. Whilst FRS 102 may be seen as a better reflection of the obligations of the employer to fund pension promises to employees, it does not reflect the actual accounting arrangements of the Pension Fund. It requires the Charitable Company to recognise the total value of all pension obligations that have accumulated (including deferred pensions) at 31 August each year.

A better reflection of a pension fund's actual position comes from the more detailed triennial assessment made by the fund actuary. This assesses and examines the ongoing financial position of the Pension Fund. The actuarial valuation can differ considerably from the FRS 102 valuation. It is the triennial actual valuation that is used to review contribution rates to the Fund from the Charitable Company, to ensure that existing assets and future contributions will be sufficient to meet future pension payments, and thus creates a risk in terms of increased contribution rates.

To mitigate these financial risks senior management closely monitor all costs, including increased pension contributions, against budgets on a monthly basis. Variance analysis is undertaken to consider the impact of varying income and costs when budgets are being prepared and through monthly management accounts and re-forecasts, and action plans are prepared and implemented to address any adverse impacts. With regards to the LGPS risk we review the accounting reports prepared annually by the respective schemes' actuaries.

#### **Data protection**

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations, with information security policies covering the risk of breach or loss of access.

#### **Financial risk management objectives and policies**

The Charitable Company uses various financial instruments including cash and various items such as trade debtors and trade creditors that arise directly from its operations. The main purpose of these financial instruments is to raise finance for the Charitable Company's operations.

The main risks arising from the Charitable Company's financial instruments are liquidity risk and interest rate risk.

Financial risk management is managed by the central office finance department who act as the Charitable Company's treasury function ensuring that surplus funds are deposited to maximise interest receivable. In addition, it uses the Charitable Company's facilities in the most efficient manner. Those facilities are designed to ensure that the Charitable Company has sufficient available funds for day-to-day operations and for planned expansion and capital expenditure. The Charitable Company seeks to manage financial risk by ensuring sufficient liquidity is available to meet foreseeable needs and to invest cash assets safely and profitably. Short term flexibility is achieved by overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company finances its operations through retained surpluses and overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company is exposed to price risk in terms of fees but is content that these are in line with those in the sector, and budgets accordingly. The principal credit risk for the Charitable Company arises from its debtors. Payment terms are enforced by the Charitable Company's credit control department and debt collection is outsourced as necessary. Credit risk is further managed through regular contact with any families in financial difficulty in an effort to assist.

Liquidity and cash flow risks are managed through the appropriate and carefully managed use of financial instruments with our principal bankers.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

### **Policies**

As part of managing our risks and to ensure good governance we outline some key policies below.

### **Reserves**

It is the policy of the Charitable Company to hold reserves in its unrestricted funds, which have not yet been committed or designated for any particular purpose. The Trustees have set aside these reserves in order to protect the future operations of the Charitable Company from the effects of any unforeseen variations in its income streams as part of a policy of good financial management practice. The Trustees have set the level of these reserves after undertaking a thorough assessment of the Charitable Company's needs and have concluded that a level of six weeks' expenditure is prudent, which is approximately £13,461k. As at 31 August 2021, there were cash reserves of £12,502k (2020: £8,254k). Reserves defined as net current assets amount to £14,825k (2020: £13,276k).

### **Investment policy**

The Charitable Company's cash reserves are used to set off against borrowings in other independent schools Group companies to minimise interest charges to the independent schools Group. Cash balances are invested with Barclays Bank. During the year the investment strategy produced returns in line with the Charitable Company's expectations and market rates.

### **Environmental policy**

The Charitable Company recognises that good environmental management must be an integral and fundamental part of its corporate business strategy.

The Charitable Company believes that protection of the environment is an integral part of good educational practice. The Charitable Company is fully committed to its responsibility for minimising the environmental impacts of its operations and will continuously aim to improve its environmental performance through the careful management of the Estate.

The Charitable Company seeks to engage all members of the school community to develop a sustainable approach to their work and activities so as to help it achieve its aims. The Charitable Company's commitment includes the environmentally prudent management of its buildings and operations, collaboration with suppliers to improve its indirect environmental impacts, and environmental programmes and education for its employees and pupils.

We continue to work towards a carbon neutral organisation which we hope to achieve by the end of the 2029-30 academic year. Key initiatives include:

- Gradually replacing old and inefficient gas boilers across our schools which will result in a reduction in carbon emissions of 210,000 kg/year.
- Reviewing all photo-voltaic installations across the Group, with the aim of establishing a much more consistent approach, as well as – where possible – identifying further opportunities for renewable energy generation.
- Finalising plans for Chilmington Green Free School, which will be a completely carbon neutral new academy, due to open near Ashford in September 2023.
- Working with our catering contractors, Chartwells, to put in place mechanisms to measure, track and reduce food waste across our academies and independent schools.
- Developing our approach to procurement, including the introduction of a zero-carbon approach to suppliers over a certain value.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

We have established a network of Carbon Neutral Champions in each our schools who work together to identify ways of further reducing carbon emissions.

**Pay policy for key management personnel**

Details of the pay policy in respect of key management personnel is included in the Governance section on page 20.

**Employee involvement and employment of the disabled**

Employees have been consulted on issues of concern to them by means of regular consultative committee and staff meetings and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by management. Regular meetings are held with staff in our schools to brief them on major issues and discuss local issues. Each school also ensures that all staff are kept fully briefed through a variety of mechanisms, including staff meetings, notice boards, newsletters and the Group intranet United Hub.

All new staff joining the Charitable Company are fully inducted and annually the Charitable Company runs two induction programmes, lasting two days, for all teachers new to United Learning. The Charitable Company carries out exit interviews for all staff leaving the organisation and has adopted a procedure of upward feedback for senior management and the Directors.

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

- Equal opportunities policy
- Volunteers' policy
- Health & safety policy

The Charitable Company has in place a National Recognition Agreement with the main teaching and support unions. Regular joint meetings of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) are held with this Group where matters of mutual interest are discussed and agreed upon.

The union members of the JNC report back to their members through locally appointed representatives. Each school also ensures all staff are kept fully briefed by using a variety of methods including staff meetings and newsletters.

In accordance with the Charitable Company's Equal Opportunities policy, the Charitable Company has long established fair employment practices in the recruitment, selection, retention and training of disabled staff.

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

Details of the Charitable Group's Gender Pay report can be found on its website at [unitedlearning.org.uk](http://unitedlearning.org.uk)

**Fundraising**

United Learning has a soft fundraising approach. In prior years, the Charitable Group has received large donations from individuals, but generally, we do not actively fundraise.

Our current approach is to work with partners and suppliers from time to time to offer fundraising packages for specific events and programmes such as our annual student and staff award ceremony and our Enterprise Programme.

Our schools regularly fundraise for themselves or charities via events such as performances, non-school uniforms day and fêtes.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

With the exception of the above, the Charitable Group does not contact or seek funding from the public or individuals, nor do we work with professional fundraisers. Occasionally, the Group is approached by trusts or individuals who are interested in working with us, and we will provide them with programme and funding information in order to explore funding opportunities that meet both parties' objectives and ethos. In prior years, we have submitted joint bid applications to trusts and funding bodies, such as the Department for Education and the Careers and Enterprise Company along with other charities.

We are members of the Fundraising Regulator Fundraising Preference Service to monitor our fundraising complaints. We did not receive any complaints this year.

### **Public benefit**

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit when reviewing the Charitable Company's aims and objectives and in planning future activities for the year.

The Charitable Company aims to educate as many young people as possible irrespective of their backgrounds. The main strands to its work are:

- Sponsorship of Academies
- Bursaries and other financial assistance
- Nurturing collaboration between schools and giving students and staff exceptional academic, sporting and cultural experiences

Beyond our schools, in March 2021 United Learning was appointed to support with the EdTech Demonstrator Schools and Colleges Programme. Funded by the Department for Education, the programme provides peer-led advice and training to help schools and colleges in England use technology to support remote teaching and improve their digital capability. As a Demonstrator school we offer packages of support, ranging from guidance, online tutorials, webinars and recorded content.

Over the course of the pandemic, subject leaders in our schools played an integral role in supplying online materials and expertise to support the Oak National Academy which was established by the DfE to develop over 40,000 free, high-quality and adaptable curriculum-aligned resources for schools across the country.

Staff across our Group, Head Teachers and members of our Executive Team have likewise provided support and expertise to working groups, research teams and national fora across the sector including in EdTech, curriculum reviews, qualification and exams policies and the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning.

### **Academies**

The Charitable Company is the sponsor of, and works very closely with, ULT in managing a group of academies. Through interaction in all of the schools and academies, the two charitable companies work together to give pupils in these academies every opportunity to succeed during their education. This involves such activities as group meetings at every level to share best practice and the sharing of educational resources over United Hub.

### **Access policy**

The Charitable Company works very hard to offer education to as many pupils as possible throughout England. Through its bursary policy, it widens the number of pupils attending UCST schools. By setting up, sponsoring, and working very closely with ULT, pupils in state funded academies enjoy the same educational resources available throughout the Charitable Company's schools. The Charitable Company's schools all access United Hub, which enables teachers at any of the schools in the Group to collaborate, share resources and challenges, positively impacting on workload.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

### **Bursary Policy**

The ability to offer education to children of families who would not be able to afford the school fees is very important to the Charitable Company. As a result of the desire to help children in this way the Charitable Company continued to operate its schemes of means tested financial assistance and its separate schemes of scholarships and family discounts, where parents have more than one child at one of our schools. Means tested assistance is available to those who would not otherwise be able to afford the fees and, equally importantly, in cases of hardship where pupil's education or future prospects might be at risk. Bursaries range in value from 5% to 100% of the school fee. During the year, the Charitable Company granted £1.28m (2020: £1.56m) to pupils attending its schools under means tested assistance. This equated to 1.17% of gross fees received (2020: 1.41%). Further details of our Bursary Policy and how to apply are on our website.

In addition during the year, the Charitable Company granted £0.9m of further discounts and £0.1m of payment deferrals from the £4m Hardship Fund set up during lockdown to support those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

### **Section 172 Statement**

The Directors fulfil their duty to promote the success of the Charitable Company, under Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) and consider the interests of United Church Schools Trust's key stakeholders when making decisions as follows.

United Church Schools Trust has a clear purpose which is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools which enable all young people to make a success of their lives. This requires the Board, senior leadership team and other employees to maintain an approach to strategic, financial and operational decision making that is values based and sustainable in approach, and therefore aligned to the requirements and expectations of Section 172. Our long-term success relies upon our delivering the strategic objectives described in the Directors' report above through our talented and committed employees; close working relationships with regulators and suppliers, providing benefits to both the pupils in our schools and the wider school community.

In the light of our purpose and strategy as set out in the Directors' Report our Directors take steps to understand the needs and priorities of each stakeholder group and do so via a number of mediums, including by direct engagement through school visits and discussions with employees; employee, parent and pupil surveys; and via committees and forums.

Strategic priorities are discussed with the Board at the start of each year. These are informed by our long-term vision, the outcomes for pupils and other key performance measures from the previous year and the outcomes of our stakeholder surveys. The Board sets key performance indicators and targets relating to these priorities and monitor performance against these at each Group Board meeting.

At Board meetings, the Directors receive reports summarising the current status of each of our schools and highlighting any notable successes or concerns. Sub-committees, as described in the Governance Statement, meet to enable scrutiny of a wider range of data and reports and to review progress against the strategic objectives.

The Board has designated named Directors to act as the key link between the Board and LGBs, and with the education teams. There are two such designated Directors, one each for secondary and primary academies. The Board has also identified link Directors for safeguarding, people, health & safety, estates, finance and information governance. Link Directors attend relevant meetings of the Executive and speak regularly with relevant key employees to provide regular oversight and ensure they understand the key issues facing the organisation and how these are being tackled.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

All Directors are invited to visit schools on a regular basis, although has been restricted in the past year due to the pandemic restrictions. These visits are generally scheduled alongside education teams so that they are able to observe the way in which Regional Directors/Education Directors engage with senior school staff in pursuing improvement priorities. Their notes of visits are shared with the Executive and with the Board.

United Church Schools Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission and has due regard to the Commission's guidance. The Trust is regulated by the Information Commissioner's Officer ("ICO"), and policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations, which have been shared with the ICO.

The Directors consider relationships with suppliers through the oversight of the Group procurement policy and Modern Slavery statement. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have worked with our suppliers to ensure continuity of service and kept them regularly updated with operational changes resulting from the pandemic restrictions. A Head of Procurement was appointed in year who will develop a group wide approach to managing supplier relationships. This approach will describe how the Group will manage its suppliers based on criticality, how it deals with performance issues and how it works with suppliers to continually improve performance and identify new and better ways of delivering services. The impact of the Charitable Company's operations on the community is referred to in the Environmental Policy in the Trustees' report.

The outcomes of this engagement with our stakeholders informs Board decision making as described in the Trustees' report above.

### **Governance**

The Board of Trustees have delegated their powers and functions to a committee of Trustees known as the Group Board. All the Trustees of United Church Schools Trust ("UCST") are members of the Group Board. Members of the Group Board also include persons who are Trustees of United Learning Trust ("ULT"), a subsidiary Charitable Company. The Group Board of Directors has formally met 7 times during the year and the UCST Board of Trustees held 3 independent meetings. Attendance during the year at the meetings of the Trustees was as follows:

	<b>UCST meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Ms Mary Curnock Cook	2	2
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	3	3
Mr Ben Gordon	3	3
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	3	3
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	3	3
Mr Mike Litchfield	3	3
Mrs Sarah Squire	3	3

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

<b>Board member</b>	<b>Group Board meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dame Yasmin Bevan, Chair	6	7
Sir Jon Coles	7	7
Dr Stephen Critchley	7	7
Ms Mary Curnock Cook	5	5
Mr Neil Davidson	5	7
Mr Michael George	7	7
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	7	7
Mr Ben Gordon	7	7
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	7	7
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	6	7
Dame Reena Keeble	6	7
Mr Mike Litchfield	7	7
Mr Neil MacDonald	6	7
Mrs Sarah Squire	7	7

The Board of Trustees delegates clear responsibilities to the Schools' Local Governing Bodies ("LGBs"), whose purpose is to provide support and challenge to the school on behalf of the Board. The functions and duties of the LGBs are set out in the LGB Members' Handbook. The Group Board maintains links with the LGBs through the Head of Local Governance, and designated Trustees for the schools. The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the LGBs are invited to attend meetings of the Education Forum, which meet three times in the academic year and provide advice on strategy and education, relevant continuing professional development and the opportunity for sharing of best practice with their peers. The Education Forum meetings further enhance communications between LGBs and the Trustees.

An external review of Board effectiveness was completed in autumn 2020 by the Confederation of School Trusts. The review was underpinned by the Competency Framework for Governance published by the Department for Education and specifically considered strategic governance, leadership and direction as well as the impact and effectiveness of governance. The review identified a range of strengths in governance at United Learning and suggested some areas for further development which have now been incorporated into an action plan which is being implemented.

Each Committee has also considered its effectiveness, terms of reference and cycle of business and made any appropriate adjustments.

### **Board Committees**

The Group Board has four further committees, which advise on matters defined by their terms of reference. The Committees are the Finance Committee, the Risk and Audit Committee, the Nominations and Remuneration Committee and the Education Standards and Performance Committee. The minutes of all committees are made available to the Board of Directors at meetings of the Group Board and any matters of concern are highlighted.

The Finance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Charitable Company properly plans the use of its finances and is adequately funded to undertake projected expenditure.
- review and recommend the annual budgets for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- monitor financial performance against agreed budgets.
- ensure, with the Risk and Audit Committee, that the Charitable Company's financial statements are supported accurately by management accounts.
- monitor and review the Charitable Company's arrangements in relation to investments and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees in relation to the appointment and removal of investment advisors.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

Attendance at meetings during the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Neil Davidson (Chair)	4	4
Dr Stephen Critchley	4	4
Mr Michael George	4	4
Mr Ben Gordon	4	4
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	4	4
Mr Mike Litchfield	4	4

The Risk and Audit Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure implementation of a risk management framework for the Group.
- ensure the Charities' annual financial statements are reconciled to the management accounts.
- ensure effective audit functions are in place (both external and internal).
- ensure adequate risk management processes are in place.
- ensure an adequate internal control environment is established.

The Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee is Mr Neil MacDonald. Mrs Karen Bowles and Mr David D'Arcy Hughes stood down in January 2021 following 7 years of service. Ms Mary Curnock Cook stood down at the end of April 2021, and Mrs Melissa Geiger and Mrs Janet Swadling were appointed to the Committee on 1 February 2021.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mrs Karen Bowles	3	3
Dr Stephen Critchley	3	4
Ms Mary Curnock Cook	3	3
Mr David D'Arcy Hughes	4	4
Mrs Melissa Geiger	1	1
Mr Neil MacDonald	4	4
Mrs Janet Swadling	1	1

A Group Nominations and Remuneration Committee exists to oversee the appointments of the Group Chairman and Directors and to approve Executive salaries and remuneration. The Committee is chaired by the Chair of the Group Board, and it is advised by the Director of HR and the Company Secretary as appropriate.

The Nominations and Remuneration Committee regularly reviews the terms of office, skills and attributes of the Board of Directors. On the basis of this, the Committee plans succession in order to ensure that the Board has available to it the range of skills and experience required to discharge its responsibilities. The Committee makes recommendations to the Board as to the need for new Directors and leads the process of recruitment of Directors as required, making recommendations of appointment to the Board. The Committee ensures that appointment is on merit, but also seeks to ensure that the Board reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

In considering Executive pay, the Committee takes account of the needs of the organisation for skills, experience and personal capabilities to enable it to achieve its objectives and the price of such skills in the labour market. The Committee considers that in order to attract and retain leaders with the skills to achieve organisational objectives, senior pay must be competitive in the marketplace, taking account of the pay rates of comparably senior and skilled employees in other organisations – particularly in comparable organisations in education, in public service and in the charitable sector, and taking account of the transferability of skills into other sectors.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

The Committee is also mindful of the need for charities and organisations in receipt of public funding to set pay rates which are publicly defensible and seen to be appropriate.

The Committee considers annual pay in relation to the performance of the organisation, and of individuals against their objectives and in their broader contribution and in any changes to job role.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Richard Greenhalgh (Chair)	3	3
Mr Ben Gordon	3	3
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	3	3
Mrs Sarah Squire	2	3

The Group Education Standards and Performance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Trust discharges its responsibilities for education improvement in providing excellent education so that pupils are able to progress, achieve and to go on to succeed in life.
- advise the Group Board with respect to Group strategic educational priorities and key performance indicators.
- provide an overview, scrutiny and challenge of education performance of all schools.
- receive reports from the Executive regarding education standards and performance of schools, and to hold the Executive to account, against the approved Group strategic priorities and key performance indicators related to schools' educational performance;
- review annually the performance of local/cluster governing bodies to ensure they are operating at maximum effectiveness.
- receive reports from Executive regarding safeguarding, and to hold the Executive to account regarding the effectiveness of policies and process designed to keep children safe.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dame Yasmin Bevan (Chair)	2	3
Sir Jon Coles	3	3
Ms Mary Curnock Cook	2	2
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	2	3
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	3	3
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall	2	3
Dame Reena Keeble	2	3

**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 ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Charitable Company's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Charitable Company for the year from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

### **Capacity to Handle Risk**

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the Charitable Company is exposed, including those risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, 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 Charitable Company's significant risks that has been in place for the year from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

The Charitable Group has a risk register that identifies the key strategic risks facing the Group, the actions taken to mitigate those risks and the owners of those actions. Risk control is exercised by the senior management team, which reviews the risk register on a monthly basis. The Risk and Audit Committee considers the risk register at each of their meetings. Its views are reported to the Board of Trustees via the Committee's minutes and the Chair's report to the Group Board.

### **The Risk and Control Framework**

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

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

The Group employs an Internal Auditor and a Head of Internal Audit who have a direct reporting line to the Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee. The Internal Audit service operates best practice professional standards and guidelines. Internal Audit independently and objectively reviews, on a continuous basis, the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Charitable Company's objectives, and contributes to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

Internal Audit's role includes giving advice on internal controls and performing a range of checks on the Charitable Company's core financial systems. Checks carried out in the year included testing of school level key controls, covering local governance, procurement, income, cash management, human resources, payroll and fixed assets. Furthermore, testing of non-financial systems and central office functions was conducted, including reviews of the organisation's local governance arrangements, senior educational appointments, treasury management, cyber security (network security and malware protection), business continuity planning and the organisation's response to COVID-19.

On a quarterly basis, the Head of Internal Audit reports to the Board of Directors through the Risk and Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Directors' financial responsibilities.

For the year ended 31 August 2021, based on the work undertaken, an internal audit opinion of reasonable assurance was given on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

These arrangements can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period.

**Chief Executive**

The Trustees delegate the day to day responsibility of the running of the Charitable Company to the Chief Executive Officer.

**Connected charities**

There is a relationship between United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) and other charities as set out in note 25.

**Statement of Trustees' (collectively known as the Board) responsibilities**

The Trustees (who are also directors of United Church Schools Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law), including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. 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 the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102).
- 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.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charitable Company will continue in operation.

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 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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**Disclosure of information to auditor**

Each of the persons who are Trustees at the time when this Trustees' report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as each Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charitable Company's auditor is unaware, and
- the Trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charitable Company's auditor is aware of that information.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*Rosalind Given-Wilson*

**Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson**  
Chair Trustee  
Date: 7/2/2022

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

---

## **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (the 'Charitable Company') for the year ended 31 August 2021, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance sheet, the Statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102; The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Charitable Company's affairs as at 31 August 2021 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.

## **Basis for opinion**

We have been appointed as auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with regulations made under that Act. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section' of our report. We are independent of the Charitable Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## **Conclusions relating to going concern**

We are responsible for concluding on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify the auditor's opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.

In our evaluation of the Trustees' conclusions, we considered the inherent risks associated with the Charitable Company's business model including effects arising from macro-economic uncertainties such as Brexit and Covid-19, we assessed and challenged the reasonableness of estimates made by the Trustees and the related disclosures and analysed how those risks might affect the Charitable Company's financial resources or ability to continue operations over the going concern period.

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 Charitable Company'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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

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.

The responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the 'Responsibilities of Trustees for the financial statements' section of this report.

**Other information**

The Trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. 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 Strategic Report and the Directors' Report, prepared for the purposes of company law, included in the Trustees' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- the Strategic Report and the Directors' Report included in the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matter on which we are required to report under the Companies Act 2006**

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the Charitable Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Strategic Report or the Directors' Report included in the Trustees' Report.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

**Responsibilities of Trustees**

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement set out on pages 23 and 24, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the Charitable Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

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](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our Auditor's report.

**Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**

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. Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that material misstatements in the financial statements may not be detected, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with the ISAs (UK).

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

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the charitable company and the sector in which it operates. We determined that the following laws and regulations were most significant: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), Charities SORP (FRS 102), Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, Data protection Act 2018 and The Education Act 2002;
- We understood how the charitable company is complying with these legal and regulatory frameworks by making inquiries of management and those charged with governance. We enquired of management and those charged with governance whether there were any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations, or whether they had any knowledge of actual or suspected fraud. We corroborated the results of our enquiries through our review of board minutes, through our legal and professional expenses review and through inquiries of solicitors who served during the period;

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

- We assessed the susceptibility of the charitable company's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur and the risk of material override of controls. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:
  - Identifying and assessing the design effectiveness of certain controls management has in place to prevent and detect fraud
  - Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting policies
  - Identifying and testing journal entries, with a focus on manual postings, journals that directly impacted on the surplus reported in the statement of financial activities and journal entries posted in the closing and accounts preparation period
  - Identifying and testing related party transactions
  - Inspecting the board and other committee minutes
  - Assessing the extent of compliance with the relevant laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement item
- These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. However, detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as those irregularities that result from fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it.
- Assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included consideration of the engagement team's:
  - understanding of, and practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity through appropriate training and participation
  - knowledge of the charity and education sector
  - understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to the charitable company including:
    - the provisions of the applicable legislation
    - guidance issued by the Charities Commission.
- The team communications in respect of potential non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations included the potential for fraud in revenue through manipulation of income and management override of controls; and
- In assessing the potential risks of material misstatement, we obtained an understanding of:
  - the charitable company's operations, including the nature of its income and expenditure and its services and of its objectives and strategies to understand the classes of transactions, account balances, expected financial statement disclosures and business risks that may result in risks of material misstatement.
  - the charitable company's control environment, including: the policies and procedures implemented by the charitable company to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework and relevant laws and regulations.
    - the policies and procedures implemented by the charitable company to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework and relevant laws and regulations
    - the adequacy of procedures for authorisation of transactions and review of management accounts
    - procedures to ensure that possible breaches of laws and regulations are appropriately resolved.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(CONTINUED)**

---

**Use of our report**

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

*Grant Thornton UK LLP*

**Gareth Norris FCA (Senior statutory auditor)**

for and on behalf of  
**Grant Thornton UK LLP**

Statutory Auditor  
Chartered Accountants

Milton Keynes

Date: 8/2/2022

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

	Note	Restricted funds 2021 £000	Unrestricted funds 2021 £000	Continuing operations 2021 £000	Discontinued operations 2021 £000	Total funds 2021 £000	Continuing operations 2020 £000	Discontinued operations 2020 £000	Total funds 2020 £000
<b>Income from:</b>									
Donations and legacies	4	-	2,417	2,257	160	2,417	(1,979)	206	(1,773)
Charitable activities	2, 3	-	119,544	118,064	1,480	119,544	113,523	2,720	116,243
<b>Total income</b>		-	121,961	120,321	1,640	121,961	111,544	2,926	114,470
<b>Expenditure on:</b>									
Charitable activities	5	-	119,955	116,663	3,292	119,955	113,670	3,733	117,403
<b>Total expenditure</b>		-	119,955	116,663	3,292	119,955	113,670	3,733	117,403
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before net gains on investments</b>									
		-	2,006	3,658	(1,652)	2,006	(2,126)	(807)	(2,933)
Net gains on investments		-	2	2	-	2	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses) carried forward</b>	12	-	2,008	3,660	(1,652)	2,008	(2,126)	(807)	(2,933)

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

Note	Restricted funds 2021 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Continuing operations 2021 £	Discontinued operations 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Continuing operations 2020 £	Discontinued operations 2020 £	Total funds 2020 £
<b>Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses) brought forward</b>	-	2,008	3,660	(1,652)	2,008	(2,126)	(807)	(2,933)
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses):</b>								
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension schemes	23	419	419	-	419	(278)	-	(278)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	-	2,427	4,079	(1,652)	2,427	(2,404)	(807)	(3,211)
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>								
Total funds brought forward	2,449	16,192	18,641	-	18,641	21,852	-	21,852
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	2,449	18,619	22,720	(1,652)	21,068	19,448	(807)	18,641

The notes on pages 35 to 62 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**  
**REGISTERED NUMBER: 02780748**

**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2021**

	Note	2021 £000	2020 £000
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	10	2,356	2,230
Tangible assets	11	5,880	5,558
Investments	12	219	217
		8,455	8,005
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stocks	13	8	13
Debtors	14	57,011	58,415
Cash and cash equivalents		12,502	8,254
		69,521	66,682
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	(54,696)	(53,406)
<b>Net current assets</b>		14,825	13,276
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		23,280	21,281
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		23,280	21,281
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	23	(2,212)	(2,640)
<b>Total net assets</b>		21,068	18,641
<b>Charity funds</b>			
Restricted funds	16	2,449	2,449
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted funds excluding pension liability	16	20,831	18,832
Pension reserve	16	(2,212)	(2,640)
Total unrestricted funds	16	18,619	16,192
<b>Total funds</b>		21,068	18,641

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**  
**REGISTERED NUMBER: 02780748**

---

**BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

*Rosalind Given-Wilson*

Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson

Date: 7/2/2022

The notes on pages 35 to 62 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2021</b> <b>£000</b>	<i>2020</i> <i>£000</i>
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	18	<b>6,960</b>	<i>(3,439)</i>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of intangible fixed assets		<b>(419)</b>	<i>(436)</i>
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		<b>(1,917)</b>	<i>(886)</i>
Net cash acquired in business combinations		-	<i>2</i>
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(2,336)</b>	<i>(1,320)</i>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Repayment of borrowing		-	<i>(2,626)</i>
Interest paid		<b>(376)</b>	<i>(543)</i>
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		<b>(376)</b>	<i>(3,169)</i>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>4,248</b>	<i>(7,928)</i>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		<b>8,254</b>	<i>16,182</i>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	19	<b>12,502</b>	<i>8,254</i>

The notes on pages 35 to 62 form part of these financial statements

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**1. Accounting policies**

**1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - 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) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

United Church Schools Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

**1.2 Consolidation**

Consolidated financial statements have not been prepared as consolidated financial statements for the Charitable Company's ultimate parent undertaking, United Church Schools Foundation Limited, are publicly available from the Charitable Company's registered office and incorporate the results of the Charitable Company and its subsidiary undertakings. These financial statements therefore represent the results of United Church Schools Trust only.

**1.3 Income**

All income is recognised once the Charitable Company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donated services or facilities are recognised when the Charitable Company has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the Charitable Company of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the Charitable Company which is the amount the Charitable Company would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Bursaries and discounts awarded are charged in the year to which they relate, and are offset against the associated income.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.4 Expenditure**

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

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities. Charitable activities are costs incurred in the Charitable Company's educational operations. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the Charitable Company and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

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

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

**1.5 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Company for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

**1.6 Company status**

The Charitable Company is a company limited by guarantee. United Church Schools Foundation Limited (Company number 00018582) is the ultimate parent undertaking and sole member of the Charitable Company. In the event of the Charitable Company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charitable Company.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.7 Going concern**

The Directors assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate, considering whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Charitable Company to continue as a going concern. The Directors make this assessment in respect of a period at least one year from the signing date of these financial statements. The Directors have considered the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in reaching their conclusions, preparing an annual budget and monitoring performance against it with forecasts for the balance of the financial year and beyond, and preparing a range of cash flow forecast scenarios. The Charitable Company maintains reserves to meet unexpected obligations and forecast models indicate that, even allowing for the economic impacts of the pandemic, the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The financial statements have therefore been prepared on a going concern basis as discussed in the Directors' Report on page 10.

**1.8 Intangible fixed assets and amortisation**

Intangible assets are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment. Amortisation begins when the intangible asset is available for use, and is charged straight line over the useful economic life of 8 - 10 years.

**1.9 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives.

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Leasehold improvements	- Term of the lease
Motor vehicles	- 4 years
Fixtures and fittings	- 10 years
Computer equipment	- 3 years

Tangible assets donated to the Charitable Company are capitalised based on their fair values which then represents the deemed historic cost of the asset.

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.

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

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.10 Investments**

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as 'Gains/(Losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

**1.11 Stocks**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks.

**1.12 Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charitable Company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

**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 Taxation**

The Charitable Company is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Charitable Company is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

**1.15 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.

**1.16 Cash and cash equivalents**

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

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.17 Liabilities and Provisions**

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 Charitable Company anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar charges.

**1.18 Financial instruments**

The Charitable Company only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors, loans from banks and other third parties, loans to related parties and investments in non-puttable ordinary shares.

Financial assets that are measured at cost and amortised cost are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

For financial assets measured at amortised cost, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. If a financial asset has a variable interest rate, the discount rate for measuring any impairment loss is the current effective interest rate determined under the contract.

For financial assets measured at cost less impairment, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and best estimate, which is an approximation of the amount that the Charitable Company would receive for the asset if it were to be sold at the balance sheet date.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset and the net amount reported in the Balance Sheet when there is an enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.19 Pensions**

The Charitable Company make contributions to a number of defined contribution pension plans for non-teaching staff and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charitable Company to the fund in respect of the year.

Retirement benefits to teaching staff are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS"). Retirement benefits to certain support staff are provided by 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 Charitable Company 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. As stated in note 23, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore 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 scheme and assets are held separately from those of the Charitable Company 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 high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each Balance Sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred. Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in other recognised gains and losses.

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

**1.20 Government Grants**

Government grant income from the coronavirus job retention scheme is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the grant income, receipt is probable, and its amount can be measured reliably.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.21 Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty**

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

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

*Actuarial valuations for Local Government Pension Scheme*

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost/(income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 23, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2021. 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.

*Unfunded pension obligations*

The Charitable Company has also made provision for unfunded pension obligations. The key assumptions made in computing this provision comprise mortality assumptions and discount rates, with the total obligation arising as a result having been disclosed in note 23. Any changes in these assumptions would impact the carrying amount of the liability.

*Depreciation of tangible fixed assets*

Depreciation is computed based on the best estimate of the useful economic lives of the relevant assets and their ultimate residual value.

*Provision for bad debts*

An allowance for doubtful debts is maintained for estimated losses resulting from the inability of the Charitable Company's fee debtors to make required payments. The Charitable Company applies a policy for providing for bad debts which is periodically reviewed based on an assessment of actual outcomes against those expected.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.22 Exceptional items**

Costs classified as exceptional relate to costs which are non-recurring and outside of the normal charitable activities of the company as disclosed in note 9.

**2. School fees receivable and catering income**

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Gross fee income receivable	<b>109,949</b>	<i>109,816</i>
Scholarships, bursaries and reduced fees	<b>(12,357)</b>	<i>(15,142)</i>
Catering income	<b>1,166</b>	<i>1,420</i>
<b>Net fee income receivable</b>	<b>98,758</b>	<i>96,094</i>

In 2021, of the total school fees receivable and catering income, £98,758k (2020: £96,986k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2020: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**3. Other educational related income**

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Support services to other schools and academies	<b>13,196</b>	<i>11,900</i>
Income from Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	<b>2,493</b>	<i>3,529</i>
Early years funding	<b>988</b>	<i>966</i>
Pupil registration fees	<b>284</b>	<i>260</i>
Charges for additional classes	<b>1,050</b>	<i>1,002</i>
Charges for school trips	<b>1,625</b>	<i>1,555</i>
Other school income	<b>772</b>	<i>684</i>
Rents and lettings	<b>378</b>	<i>253</i>
	<b>20,786</b>	<i>20,149</i>

In 2021, of the other educational related income, £20,786k (2020: £19,257k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2020: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**4. Voluntary income**

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Other sponsorship and donations received	<b>1,925</b>	<i>2,607</i>
Gift aid from subsidiary undertakings	<b>492</b>	<i>-</i>
Gift aid - COVID-19 donations	<b>-</b>	<i>10</i>
Net liabilities transferred from other charities	<b>-</b>	<i>(4,390)</i>
	<b>2,417</b>	<i>(1,773)</i>
	<b>2,417</b>	<i>(1,773)</i>

In 2021, of the total voluntary income, £2,417k (2020: (£1,962k)) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2020: £189k) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**5. Analysis of total resources expended**

	<b>Staff costs</b>	<b>Other costs</b>	<b>Depreciation</b>	<b>Total</b>	<i>Total</i>
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Schools operating costs</b>					
Educational supplies	64,314	7,337	-	<b>71,651</b>	69,825
Recruitment and support	-	315	-	<b>315</b>	377
Staff development	198	40	-	<b>238</b>	32
Examination fees	-	112	-	<b>112</b>	77
Technology costs	3,419	1,972	-	<b>5,391</b>	5,290
Premises costs	4,257	10,428	-	<b>14,685</b>	14,429
Insurance	-	556	-	<b>556</b>	467
Catering	-	4,977	-	<b>4,977</b>	3,893
Marketing	823	1,321	-	<b>2,144</b>	2,371
Legal and professional	-	1,136	-	<b>1,136</b>	895
Other support costs	13,736	2,281	-	<b>16,017</b>	17,195
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	1,693	<b>1,693</b>	1,583
Loss on disposal of operations	-	195	-	<b>195</b>	-
Bank interest and charges	-	485	-	<b>485</b>	643
	<u>86,747</u>	<u>31,155</u>	<u>1,693</u>	<b><u>119,595</u></b>	<u>117,077</u>
<b>Governance costs</b>					
Auditor costs - audit fees	-	52	-	<b>52</b>	48
Company Secretariat costs	273	34	-	<b>307</b>	277
Trustees' meeting and travel	-	1	-	<b>1</b>	1
	<u>87,020</u>	<u>31,242</u>	<u>1,693</u>	<b><u>119,955</u></b>	<u>117,403</u>
<b>Total 2021</b>	<b><u>87,020</u></b>	<b><u>31,242</u></b>	<b><u>1,693</u></b>	<b><u>119,955</u></b>	<b><u>117,403</u></b>
<i>Total 2020</i>	<u>85,195</u>	<u>30,625</u>	<u>1,583</u>	<u>117,403</u>	

In 2021, of the total resources expended, £119,955k (2020: £117,403k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2020: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

Total resources expended include:

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Auditor's remuneration:		
Audit of the charitable company's annual financial statements	<b>52</b>	<i>48</i>
Non-audit services	<b>10</b>	<i>8</i>
Depreciation:		
Tangible fixed assets, owned	<b>1,400</b>	<i>1,458</i>
Amortisation: Intangible fixed assets	<b>293</b>	<i>125</i>
Loss on disposal of operations	<b>195</b>	<i>-</i>
Operating lease rentals	<b>1,082</b>	<i>1,155</i>
	<b>=====</b>	<i>=====</i>

**6. Net interest**

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Interest payable to Group undertakings	<b>376</b>	<i>543</i>
	<b>=====</b>	<i>=====</i>

**7. Staff costs**

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Wages and salaries	<b>69,249</b>	<i>67,992</i>
Social security costs	<b>6,662</b>	<i>6,202</i>
Other pension costs (note 23)	<b>10,761</b>	<i>10,650</i>
Agency fees	<b>348</b>	<i>351</i>
	<b>=====</b>	<i>=====</i>
	<b>87,020</b>	<i>85,195</i>
	<b>=====</b>	<i>=====</i>

During the year, there were redundancy or termination payments made which amounted to £735k (2020: £506k).

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

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>No.</b>	<i>No.</i>
	<b>2,408</b>	<i>2,550</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**7. Staff costs (continued)**

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

	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>No.</b>	No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	<b>62</b>	54
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	<b>25</b>	15
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	<b>8</b>	10
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	<b>11</b>	15
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	<b>5</b>	7
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	<b>4</b>	4
In the band £120,001 - £130,000	<b>4</b>	3
In the band £130,001 - £140,000	<b>5</b>	-
In the band £140,001 - £150,000	<b>2</b>	2
In the band £150,001 - £160,000	<b>1</b>	-
In the band £160,001 - £170,000	<b>1</b>	4
In the band £170,001 - £180,000	<b>2</b>	1
In the band £180,001 - £190,000	<b>1</b>	1
In the band £190,001 - £200,000	<b>2</b>	-
In the band £230,001 - £240,000	-	1
In the band £240,001 - £250,000	<b>1</b>	-
In the band £250,001 - £260,000	<b>1</b>	1

Key management personnel, as listed on page 1, are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity. The remuneration for these individuals totalled £1,383k (2020: £1,315k).

During the year, the following amounts were paid in respect of higher paid employees as shown above:

	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Pension contributions to defined contribution, teachers' pension scheme and local government pension schemes	<b>1,926</b>	1,771

During the year, 32 higher paid employees (2020: 27) participated in defined contribution schemes, 93 (2020: 87) participated in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (operated by the Teachers' Pension Agency), 2 (2020: 2) participated in the Local Government Pension Scheme and 8 (2020: 2) did not participate in Charitable Company pension schemes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**Payment to Trustees**

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2020 - £NIL).

No Trustee, or person with a family or business connection with a Trustee, received remuneration in the year, directly or indirectly, from either the Charitable Company or a company controlled by the Charitable Company.

Expense reimbursements paid to 1 (2020: 2) Trustees during the year amounted to £1k (2020: £1k) and all related to travel and subsistence costs.

**8. Interest on Local Government Pension Scheme**

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Interest on pension scheme liabilities	<b>(158)</b>	<i>(165)</i>
Interest income on pension scheme assets	<b>127</b>	<i>139</i>
	<b>(31)</b>	<i>(26)</i>
	<b>(31)</b>	<i>(26)</i>

**9. Exceptional items**

Exceptional costs incurred in school closures, mergers, acquisitions and disposals and in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak during the year ended 31 August 2021 amounted to £522k (2020: £2,285k).

On 31 August 2021, PHC Hitchin has been treated as a discontinued operation, as disclosed on the face of the statement of financial activities.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**10. Intangible assets**

	<b>Software development £000</b>
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 September 2020	2,576
Additions	419
At 31 August 2021	2,995
<b>Amortisation</b>	
At 1 September 2020	346
Charge for the year	293
At 31 August 2021	639
<b>Net book value</b>	
At 31 August 2021	2,356
<i>At 31 August 2020</i>	2,230

All intangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**11. Tangible fixed assets**

	Long-term leasehold property £000	Fixtures and fittings £000	Computer equipment £000	Motor vehicles £000	Total £000
<b>Cost</b>					
At 1 September 2020	1,868	10,901	4,907	625	18,301
Additions	281	1,071	433	132	1,917
Disposals	-	(446)	(727)	(45)	(1,218)
Transfers between classes	(41)	41	-	-	-
At 31 August 2021	<u>2,108</u>	<u>11,567</u>	<u>4,613</u>	<u>712</u>	<u>19,000</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 September 2020	812	6,842	4,541	548	12,743
Charge for the year	29	854	443	74	1,400
On disposals	-	(255)	(725)	(43)	(1,023)
At 31 August 2021	<u>841</u>	<u>7,441</u>	<u>4,259</u>	<u>579</u>	<u>13,120</u>
<b>Net book value</b>					
At 31 August 2021	<u><u>1,267</u></u>	<u><u>4,126</u></u>	<u><u>354</u></u>	<u><u>133</u></u>	<u><u>5,880</u></u>
At 31 August 2020	<u><u>1,056</u></u>	<u><u>4,059</u></u>	<u><u>366</u></u>	<u><u>77</u></u>	<u><u>5,558</u></u>

All tangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**12. Fixed asset investments**

		<b>Listed investments £000</b>
<b>Valuation</b>		
At 1 September 2020		217
Fair value adjustments		2
At 31 August 2021		219
	<b>2021 £000</b>	<b>2020 £000</b>
<b>Investments at value comprise:</b>		
Listed investments	219	217

All the fixed asset investments are held in the UK.

**Subsidiary undertakings**

At 31 August 2021, the Charitable Company held more than 20% of the following:

	<b>Holding</b>	<b>Nature of the business</b>	<b>Class of share capital held</b>
	%		
St. Ives (Haslemere) Limited*	100	Dormant	-
United Learning Trust*	100	Education	-
Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited*	100	Dormant	-

\*Limited by guarantee

The registered office address of St. Ives (Haslemere) Limited, United Learning Trust and Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited is Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, England, PE3 6SB.

**13. Stocks**

	<b>2021 £000</b>	<b>2020 £000</b>
Finished goods and goods for resale	8	13

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**14. Debtors**

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Trade debtors	<b>29,492</b>	<i>30,943</i>
Amounts owed by Group undertakings	<b>24,290</b>	<i>23,051</i>
Other debtors	<b>882</b>	<i>2,677</i>
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>2,347</b>	<i>1,744</i>
	<b>57,011</b>	<i>58,415</i>

**15. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Trade creditors	<b>3,250</b>	<i>2,453</i>
Amounts owed to Group undertakings	<b>6</b>	<i>6</i>
Other taxation and social security	<b>1,865</b>	<i>1,744</i>
Other creditors	<b>11,867</b>	<i>12,516</i>
Accruals and deferred income	<b>37,708</b>	<i>36,687</i>
	<b>54,696</b>	<i>53,406</i>

Amounts owed to Group undertakings are unsecured, interest free and repayable on demand.

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Deferred income at 1 September 2020	<b>33,100</b>	<i>33,314</i>
Resources deferred during the year	<b>34,594</b>	<i>33,100</i>
Amounts released from previous periods	<b>(33,100)</b>	<i>(33,314)</i>
<b>Deferred income as at 31 August 2021</b>	<b>34,594</b>	<i>33,100</i>

Deferred income relates to fees invoiced in advance for the Autumn term.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**16. Statement of funds**

**Statement of funds - current year**

	Balance at 1 September 2020 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Gains/ (Losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2021 £000
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Designated funds	3,747	(961)	108	-	2,894
<b>General funds</b>					
General Funds - all funds	15,085	122,922	(120,072)	2	17,937
Pension reserve	(2,640)	-	9	419	(2,212)
	<u>12,445</u>	<u>122,922</u>	<u>(120,063)</u>	<u>421</u>	<u>15,725</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>16,192</u>	<u>121,961</u>	<u>(119,955)</u>	<u>421</u>	<u>18,619</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	720	-	-	-	720
	<u>2,449</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,449</u>
<b>Total of funds</b>	<u><u>18,641</u></u>	<u><u>121,961</u></u>	<u><u>(119,955)</u></u>	<u><u>421</u></u>	<u><u>21,068</u></u>

Designated funds are accumulated surpluses from prior years available for use by the School that generated the funds. In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the Charitable Company transferred £4 million of general funds to designated funds during 2020 to be used in support of those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

The Sponsorship fund has been formed to gather together the external donations received towards the Charitable Company's support for the academies of United Learning Trust.

Other donated funds include a number of individual donations towards specific building and other projects within the Group.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**16. Statement of funds (continued)**

**Statement of funds - prior year**

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2019 £000</i>	<i>Income £000</i>	<i>Expenditure £000</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £000</i>	<i>Gains/ (Losses) £000</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2020 £000</i>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
<b>Designated funds</b>						
Designated funds	392	(474)	(171)	4,000	-	3,747
<b>General funds</b>						
General Funds - all funds	21,551	114,755	(117,221)	(4,000)	-	15,085
Pension reserve	(2,351)	-	(11)	-	(278)	(2,640)
	<u>19,200</u>	<u>114,755</u>	<u>(117,232)</u>	<u>(4,000)</u>	<u>(278)</u>	<u>12,445</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>19,592</u>	<u>114,281</u>	<u>(117,403)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(278)</u>	<u>16,192</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>						
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	531	189	-	-	-	720
	<u>2,260</u>	<u>189</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,449</u>
<b>Total of funds</b>	<u><u>21,852</u></u>	<u><u>114,470</u></u>	<u><u>(117,403)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>(278)</u></u>	<u><u>18,641</u></u>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**17. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current year**

	<b>Restricted funds 2021 £000</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds 2021 £000</b>	<b>Total funds 2021 £000</b>
Tangible fixed assets	-	5,880	<b>5,880</b>
Intangible fixed assets	-	2,356	<b>2,356</b>
Fixed asset investments	-	219	<b>219</b>
Current assets	2,449	67,072	<b>69,521</b>
Creditors due within one year	-	(54,696)	<b>(54,696)</b>
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(2,212)	<b>(2,212)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,449</b>	<b>18,619</b>	<b>21,068</b>

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year**

	<i>Restricted funds 2020 £000</i>	<i>Unrestricted funds 2020 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2020 £000</i>
Tangible fixed assets	-	5,558	5,558
Intangible fixed assets	-	2,230	2,230
Fixed asset investments	-	217	217
Current assets	2,449	64,233	66,682
Creditors due within one year	-	(53,406)	(53,406)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(2,640)	(2,640)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,449</b>	<b>16,192</b>	<b>18,641</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**18. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities**

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Net income/expenditure for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	<b>2,008</b>	<i>(2,933)</i>
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation and amortisation charges	<b>1,693</b>	<i>1,583</i>
Interest paid	<b>407</b>	<i>569</i>
Decrease in stocks	<b>5</b>	<i>1</i>
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	<b>1,404</b>	<i>(1,366)</i>
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	<b>1,290</b>	<i>(5,668)</i>
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	<b>195</b>	<i>-</i>
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	<b>(40)</b>	<i>(15)</i>
Net liabilities acquired from other charities	<b>-</b>	<i>4,390</i>
Revaluation of fixed asset investments	<b>(2)</b>	<i>-</i>
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>6,960</b>	<i>(3,439)</i>

**19. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents**

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Cash in hand	<b>12,502</b>	<i>8,254</i>

**20. Analysis of changes in net debt**

	<b>At 1 September 2020</b>	<b>Cash flows</b>	<b>At 31 August 2021</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	<b>8,254</b>	<b>4,248</b>	<b>12,502</b>

**21. Contingent liabilities**

At 31 August 2021, the Charitable Company was party to cross-guarantees on bank loans and overdrafts of the parent undertaking totalling £18,845k (2020: £26,817k).

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**22. Capital commitments**

There were no capital commitments at 31 August 2021 or 31 August 2020.

**23. Pension commitments**

The Charitable Company operates defined contribution schemes for the benefit of its employees. The assets of the schemes are managed and held externally on behalf of the scheme members in funds independent from those of the Charitable Company. Employer contributions payable to the schemes during the year amounted to £1.317m (2020: £1.266m). Employee and employer contributions payable to the schemes at the Balance Sheet date amounted to £175k (2020: £168k) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company operates two defined benefit pension scheme: the Teachers' Pension Scheme for England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff, and the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff of one school, which is managed by the Local Authority.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2016 and of the LGPS 31 March 2019.

Contributions amounting to £1,045k were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2021 (2020 - £997k) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company also has an unfunded defined benefit pension scheme which is provided for in the financial statements.

Provisions for unfunded pensions included within the total defined benefit pension scheme liability amounted to £1,005k (2020: £860k). The current service cost amounted to £Nil (2020: £Nil) and actuarial losses recognised through other comprehensive income amounted to £252k (2020: £73k). Benefits paid during the year amounted to £108k (2020: £107k).

The current mortality assumptions in respect of unfunded pensions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on the retirement age of 65 are between 19-21 years. The discount rate applied in calculating the obligation is 1.70%, with future pension increase and inflation being 4.8%.

**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. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment.

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

**Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme**

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

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

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

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

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

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £9.008m (2020 - £8.937m).

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 Charitable Company has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Charitable Company has set out above the information available on the scheme.

**Local Government Pension Scheme**

The Charitable Company is one of several employing bodies included within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee administered funds. Contributions to the scheme are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of triennial valuations using the projected unit method.

The total employer's contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2021 was £59k (2020: £76k). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 17.9 - 18.7 per cent for employers and 5.5 - 9.9 per cent for employees.

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Balance sheet date (expressed as weighted averages):

	<b>At 31 August 2021</b>	<i>At 31 August 2020</i>
	%	%
Discount rate	<b>1.70</b>	1.70
Future salary increases	<b>4.20</b>	3.90
Future pension increases	<b>2.80</b>	2.50
Inflation assumption	<b>2.70</b>	2.40

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

	<b>2021</b>	2020
Mortality rates (in years)		
- for a male aged 65 now	<b>22.4</b>	22.3
- at 65 for a male aged 45 now	<b>23.9</b>	23.8
- for a female aged 65 now	<b>25.1</b>	25.0
- at 65 for a female aged 45 now	<b>26.9</b>	26.8

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

	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Equities	<b>4,271</b>	3,479
Bonds	<b>448</b>	526
Property	<b>845</b>	1,038
Cash	<b>177</b>	137
Other	<b>2,715</b>	2,449
<b>Total market value of LGPS assets</b>	<b>8,456</b>	7,629

The actual return on scheme assets was £1,050k (2020 - £(45k)).

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities are as follows (for both the LGPS and unfunded pension scheme):

	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Current service cost	<b>(124)</b>	(144)
Past service cost	-	(27)
Interest cost	<b>(158)</b>	(165)
Interest income	<b>127</b>	139
Administrative expenses	<b>(3)</b>	(2)
<b>Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities</b>	<b>(158)</b>	(199)

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**23. Pension commitments (continued)**

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

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening defined benefit obligation	<b>10,269</b>	<i>10,123</i>
Current service cost	<b>124</b>	<i>144</i>
Interest cost	<b>158</b>	<i>165</i>
Contributions by scheme participants	<b>21</b>	<i>25</i>
Actuarial losses	<b>504</b>	<i>94</i>
Past service cost	<b>-</b>	<i>27</i>
Benefits paid - LGPS	<b>(300)</b>	<i>(202)</i>
Benefits paid - unfunded obligation	<b>(108)</b>	<i>(107)</i>
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>10,668</b>	<i>10,269</i>

Movements in the fair value of the Company's share of scheme assets were as follows:

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening fair value of scheme assets	<b>7,629</b>	<i>7,772</i>
Interest on assets	<b>127</b>	<i>139</i>
Actual return less interest	<b>923</b>	<i>(184)</i>
Contributions by employer	<b>59</b>	<i>81</i>
Contributions by scheme participants	<b>21</b>	<i>25</i>
Benefits paid	<b>(300)</b>	<i>(202)</i>
Administration expenses	<b>(3)</b>	<i>(2)</i>
<b>Closing fair value of scheme assets</b>	<b>8,456</b>	<i>7,629</i>

The Charitable Company expects to contribute £59k to the LGPS in 2022.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

Amounts for the current and previous period are as follows:

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Defined benefit pension schemes</b>		
Defined benefit obligations (including unfunded pension deficit)	<b>(10,668)</b>	<i>(10,269)</i>
LGPS assets	<b>8,456</b>	<i>7,629</i>
<b>Net deficit</b>	<b>(2,212)</b>	<i>(2,640)</i>
Experience adjustments on LGPS and unfunded liabilities	<b>(504)</b>	<i>(94)</i>
Experience adjustments on LGPS assets	<b>923</b>	<i>(184)</i>
	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
LGPS net deficit	<b>1,207</b>	<i>1,780</i>
Unfunded pension scheme liability	<b>1,005</b>	<i>860</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,212</b>	<i>2,640</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

**24. Operating lease commitments**

At 31 August 2021 the Company had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Land and buildings</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>178</b>	<i>227</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>533</b>	<i>372</i>
After more than 5 years	<b>49</b>	<i>286</i>
	<b>760</b>	<i>885</i>
	<b>760</b>	<i>885</i>
	<b>2021</b>	<i>2020</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Other</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>802</b>	<i>1,082</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>767</b>	<i>1,077</i>
	<b>1,569</b>	<i>2,159</i>
	<b>1,569</b>	<i>2,159</i>

**25. Related party transactions**

United Church Schools Foundation Limited is the sole member of United Church School Trust (UCST).

During the year, United Church Schools Foundation Limited charged interest totalling £376k (2020: £543k) and rent totalling £1,987k (2020: £2,653k) to the Charitable Company.

UCST is the sole member of United Learning Trust (ULT).

The Charitable Company provided central services to ULT. The total amount charged during the year totalled £12,454k (2020: £11,399k) and was computed so as to equal the actual costs incurred on a per pupil basis.

At the year end date, balances amounting to £24,290k (2020: £23,051k) were due to the Charitable Company, and balances amounting to £6k (2020: £6k) were due from the Charitable Company to other entities in the Charitable Group of which United Church Schools Foundation Limited is the ultimate parent. These balances arise as a result of direct recharges of costs where resources are centrally procured, with the underlying transactions not therefore representing related party transactions.

There have been no other transactions with related parties that require disclosure under either FRS 102 or Charities SORP (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

---

**26. Post balance sheet events**

Bank loans of the parent undertaking, to which the Charitable Company is party to cross-guarantees, which were due to mature in March 2022, have been re-negotiated since the balance sheet date and mature in February 2025.

**27. Ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party**

The Board consider that the ultimate and immediate parent undertaking of the Charitable Company is United Church Schools Foundation Limited (Company number: 00018582) by virtue of the fact that it is the sole member and therefore has the ability to appoint or remove trustees. The principal objects of United Church Schools Foundation Limited are the same as those of the Charitable Company.

In the opinion of the Directors, there is no ultimate controlling party.

The largest group of undertakings for which group accounts have been drawn up is that headed by United Church Schools Foundation Limited. Copies of the group accounts can be obtained from Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, PE3 6SB.

**United Church Schools Trust**

England & Wales - Charity number 1016538

---

# Accounts

---

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**CONTENTS**

---

	Page
<b>Reference and administrative details of the Company, its Trustees and advisers</b>	1 - 2
<b>Trustees' report</b>	3 - 22
<b>Independent auditor's report on the financial statements</b>	23 - 26
<b>Statement of financial activities</b>	27 - 28
<b>Balance sheet</b>	29 - 30
<b>Statement of cash flows</b>	31
<b>Notes to the financial statements</b>	32 - 60

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)****REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**Trustees**

Ms Mary Curnock Cook  
The Very Rev. Dr John Hall (appointed 1 January 2020)  
Mr Ben Gordon  
Mr Richard Greenhalgh  
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson, Chair  
Mr Mike Litchfield  
Mrs Sarah Squire

Biographies for Trustees can be found at [www.unitedlearning.org.uk](http://www.unitedlearning.org.uk)

**Company registered number** 02780748

**Charity registered number** 1016538

**Registered office**

Worldwide House  
Thorpe Wood  
Peterborough  
PE3 6SB

**Company secretary** Mrs Alison Hussain

**Chief executive officer** Sir Jon Coles

**Senior management team**

Sir Jon Coles, Chief Executive Officer  
Dame Sally Coates, Director of Secondary Education  
Mr Darran Ellison-Lee, Director of Primary Education  
Mrs Louise Johnston, Chief Financial Officer  
Mr Dominic Norrish, Chief Operating Officer  
Ms Anna Paige, Director of Strategy and Performance

**Independent auditor**

Grant Thornton UK LLP  
Statutory Auditor  
Victoria House  
199 Avebury Boulevard  
Milton Keynes  
MK9 1AU

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE COMPANY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS  
(CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**Bankers**                      Barclays Bank PLC  
One Snowhill  
Snowhill Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6GN

**Solicitors**                    Hewitsons LLP  
Elgin House  
Billing Road  
Northampton  
NN1 5BA

Stone King LLP  
3rd Floor  
Bateman House  
82-88 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB2 1LQ

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

The Trustees (who are also directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) (the Charitable Company) for the year ended 31 August 2020. The Trustees confirm that the Trustees' Report and financial statements of the Charitable Company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Charitable Company's governing document and the provisions of 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 (FRS102) ("SORP 2019").

**Constitution and objects**

The United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) is registered with the Charity Commission (No. 1016538) and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales), governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended in 2004. The Charitable Company is established for charitable purposes and in accordance with its Memorandum of Association its principal activity is to provide a liberal, practical and general education for children which includes religious instruction in the doctrine and duties of Christianity.

**Members of the Board (hereafter called "Trustees")**

The present membership of the Board is set out under Reference and Administrative Details. All Trustees served throughout the year except where indicated.

Each member of the Board of Trustees holds one share in United Church Schools Foundation Ltd ("UCSF"), the ultimate parent undertaking.

**Appointment of Trustees**

The Board has the power to appoint any person as an additional Trustee or to fill a casual vacancy. A Trustee holds office for three years, after which they must resign. They may remain in office for a further three years with the consent of the Board. Following this, they shall be eligible for re-election annually upon the proposal of the Chair.

The training and induction provided for new Trustees is dependent upon their existing experience. Where necessary, induction will provide training on charity, educational, legal and financial matters. All new Trustees are given tours of the United Learning Group's ("the Group") schools and academies and the chance to meet with staff and students. They are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role as Trustees. Induction is tailored specifically to the individual. The Company Secretary works with the Trustees to identify training needs and steps to keep the Trustees updated regarding the regulatory environment.

**Strategic report****Strategies and activities**

The principal object of the Charitable Company is set out on above.

Founded in 1883 as an educational charity anchored in the Church of England, the Charitable Company manages the operation of a group of Independent Schools to provide education for students of different abilities between the ages of 0 and 18. Its admission policies welcome people from all employment, faiths and backgrounds. In 2001, it created a subsidiary charity, United Learning Trust ("ULT") to extend its work into some of the most challenging inner city areas through the City Academy programme, and to this day the Charitable Company remains the sponsor of the ULT multi-academy trust.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**About United Learning**

The overall aim of the Charitable Group is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools which enable all young people to make a success of their lives. The roots of our charity can be traced back over 135 years, and over this period, we have founded and developed a large number of schools, focused on the most important social and educational challenges of the day. Our strength as a group of schools lies in the unique collaboration between the state and independent sectors, in our national reach and growing regional clusters and in our dedication to continuous improvement, to developing each pupil's whole character and our pursuit of excellence. Our track record in some of the country's most challenging schools is based on structures and systems which ensure high expectations, rigour, enthusiasm and breadth.

As of 31 August 2020, United Learning – the trading name of the Charitable Group – comprises 14 independent schools operated within United Church Schools Trust ("UCST"), 72 state sector academies operated within the Charitable Company and a central office function that serves all our schools.

**Operating review****COVID-19 Pandemic**

The 2019/20 academic year was overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic which began to have an impact on all schools across the country from the middle of February 2020.

Our schools remained open throughout February and March until the Government announced the closure of all schools in England from 20 March 2020. During the lockdown period, our schools offered extensive remote learning programmes so pupils could continue to learn from home. Our schools remained open for children of key workers and those deemed to be vulnerable, with up to 1,350 children attending our schools each day. Further detail of the impact of COVID-19 is provided in the relevant sections of the Trustees' report.

During the lockdown period, the Charitable Company set up a £4 million Hardship Fund to support those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic. We also waived fees for boarding and nurseries, and introduced reductions of 30% for Reception, 25% for Years 1 and 2 and 10% for all other year groups.

**Framework for Excellence**

Our 'Framework for Excellence' sets out the principles of an excellent education that we follow as a group. At the heart of this framework are two principles which articulate what we think schools should provide for young people: 'powerful knowledge' and 'education with character'. The first is about giving young people the knowledge, understanding and cognitive skills they will need to make a success of their lives; the second is about the development of the broader traits, personal qualities and dispositions they will need.

**Powerful Knowledge**

Our most important purpose is to teach young people things they would not learn outside school, which free them to think and act more powerfully in their lives. This includes succeeding in examinations and gaining subject-based knowledge but goes beyond it.

Across the Group, the Rosenshine Principles are being used to underpin all work in teaching and learning to support personal development, continuous professional development, work scrutiny, lesson observation, leadership and curriculum development, Schemes of Learning and policies as well as learning planning. The Rosenshine Principles aim to minimise the use of working memory and to work with long-term memory to embed learning. They are firmly based on research which shows how the brain acquires and uses new information as well as research into successful classroom practice.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

Whilst the majority of pupils across the Group could not physically attend schools during the lockdown period, their learning continued remotely and our schools sought to deliver a full curriculum through live online lessons, recorded lessons and work packs, and learning resources available on our Group website and intranet The Hub. During this period, teachers downloaded more than 85,000 curriculum resources from the site and 10,000 pupils logged onto the central pupil-facing site.

Pupils engaged well in the schools' remote learning programmes. Throughout the summer term, the extent to which pupils reported following lessons plans and work packs from their school stayed consistently above 80% as did their understanding of what their teachers were asking them to do. Pupils also felt well supported by their teachers with more than 70% of pupils reporting that they could access support from their teachers when needed. Over 80% of pupils reported that they were sent a good variety of learning tasks to complete throughout the term.

**A Common Curriculum**

Our schools offer a deep education in inclusive schools. Over the past five years, we have developed a common curriculum for our schools, spanning both primary and secondary phases and covering a range of core subjects: English, maths, science, history, geography, MFL, computing, art and PE.

These curricula are sequenced in such a way as to develop subject mastery and to encourage regular, deliberate practice from students. This is to ensure that every child across our Group gets the same core grounding in the body of knowledge needed to succeed in further study and beyond.

Following lockdown in March 2020 we accelerated our efforts to fully resource our curriculum, with lesson-by-lesson resources for teachers and pupils. These resources are hosted on our curriculum website where teachers can access classroom resources such as lesson PowerPoints, quizzes, topic tests and summative assessments. On the pupil side of the website, pupils can access pre-recorded video lessons which include pause points giving them time to complete tasks.

**Academic Performance**

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, GCSE and A Level examinations were cancelled. Despite our, and others', warnings to Ofqual about the risks of the process that they attempted to put in place, results were ultimately based on teachers' predictions for individual students known as Centre Assessed Grades ("CAGs"). Staff calculated CAGs based on a comprehensive range of evidence including mock grades, past coursework and classroom learning.

The CAGs received robust scrutiny from middle and senior leaders within schools and across our cluster system to create the most accurate grades possible for what each student was likely to have received. The CAGs enabled students to receive their individual grades so they could progress on to further and higher education.

In most cases, Sixth Formers were able to progress on to their first-choice university which included Russell Group universities and Oxbridge. Likewise, all our schools endeavoured to provide places to students staying on for their school's Sixth Form. Students were also able to secure places at other Sixth Form Colleges and go into further training and apprenticeship courses.

Due to the pandemic, Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments were also cancelled.

Over the course of the year, Dunottar School received a full ISI inspection. Inspectors found that the school met all expected standards and described the quality of pupils' personal development as 'excellent'.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**Education with Character**

Alongside the intellectual development of young people encompassed within our concept of 'powerful knowledge', we place significant weight on the development of the whole person. We want young people to emerge from school with the personal qualities and wider skills to make the most of their cognitive abilities. We call this Education with Character and this is an increasingly strong feature of our schools.

Across our Group, we expect all our pupils to contribute to their school and to society; to try things which they think they cannot do; to persist in the face of difficulty; to become resilient in overcoming obstacles; to manage themselves; to work independently on things which challenge them; to work with others and in teams; to be courageous and caring; to lead. We encourage our schools to develop each student's personal integrity, to ensure they learn to make the right choices even when the rules are not clear.

Our schools have also continued to devise and develop their individual pupil charters – the promise they make to children about what they can expect to experience each year in addition to their normal classroom learning. As part of this, schools have dedicated extracurricular programmes and bring the curriculum to life with visits from external speakers and trips out into their local communities and beyond.

Furthermore, we encourage sustained and meaningful collaboration between our schools and others through a range of Group-wide activities, initiatives and competitions designed to further develop their confidence and soft skills and to ready them for the next stages of their school careers.

To ensure our schools are properly meeting the needs of the pupils they serve, we conducted a Learning from Learners Survey which questioned 25,000 Year 7-10 pupils across our academies and independent schools. The survey asked for their views on their school, teaching and learning, themselves as learners, reading and homework, their future and continuous improvement. Headline findings for the independents include:

**At Primary:**

- 92% of pupils agreed that there is the right level of challenge in their lessons and 88% that feedback helps them to improve;
- 98% of pupils said they were proud of their school;
- 95% of pupils said they felt safe;
- 94% of pupils said they felt a strong sense of belonging to their school.

**At Secondary:**

- 95% of students agreed that their teachers expect them to be successful;
- 95% of students said they felt safe at school;
- 90% said they were proud of their school;
- 83% of students said that the level of challenge in their lessons is right and 85% that the feedback they receive help them to move on in their learning.

Our commitment to Education with Character remained steadfast throughout the lockdown period with schools offering online enrichment provision such as physical activity and music. Schools also nurtured and celebrated key personal characteristics such as resilience, hard work and independent study.

Similarly, the schools continued to offer excellent pastoral care and sought to look after the physical and mental wellbeing of pupils in whichever ways they could.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**Outstanding People and Leadership****Successful Staff Engagement**

Our success as a Group is dependent on the excellent people and leadership at all levels of our schools – across the country and centrally. This was reflected in the response rate to our Group Staff Survey which remained high at 70% for our independents. Likewise, our Overall Employee Engagement score (defined by Ipsos Mori as “an employee’s willingness to put discretionary effort into their work in the form of time, thought and energy”) was 79% for independents which is in line with last year's figure. As in previous years, scores on staff’s pride in their school, motivation and attitudes towards the Group’s aims and values well exceeded the UK, public sector and education norms.

Key findings include:

- 92% of staff said they were proud to work in their school/department;
- 81% felt motivated in their current job;
- 85% said their job gave them a sense of fulfilment;
- 86% said they valued their school/department’s culture.

During lockdown we continued to communicate regularly with staff. As well as email bulletins from central office, we also held two Chief Executive ‘Town Hall’ briefings in April and May. Each briefing was attended by 2,500 members of staff from across the Group. To support teachers provide remote learning, the Technology Team ran a host of training webinars on using specific software packages. Webinars covered how to deliver live lessons and webinars, how to set, hand in and mark assignments and how to facilitate parental information broadcasts.

The Best in Everyone conference which introduces new staff to the Group was also held virtually and saw an increase in attendance of 12.5% compared to last year. Likewise, our Heads Induction programme was successfully delivered online.

The Group’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic was welcomed by staff at both our academies and independent schools with 94% of those who responded to the June Pulse Survey stating that they were ‘proud’ of their school’s response to the situation.

A total of 915 staff in the Charitable Company were furloughed during the summer term and returned to their roles in the new academic year. Those who were furloughed included staff managing extra curricula activities such as after school clubs, boarding staff and nursery provision staff. The Charitable Company topped up the salaries of those who were furloughed so that they continued to receive their full pay.

**Developing Leaders**

Through our range of Group-wide initiatives, we aim to give all leaders the opportunity to develop all aspects of their leadership. We want to give them access to the best role models and training from within the Group and the time to reflect and grow as leaders.

Our flagship Leadership Development Residential helps develop Middle and Senior Leaders towards promotional opportunities. These popular two-day training programmes are always fully subscribed and continued to be consistently evaluated as good or outstanding during the 2019/20 academic year. 44 leaders attended the course between September to March, with the summer term events postponed due to COVID-19. We will be reviewing this initiative in the new year to establish how we can take it forward under current government guidelines and restrictions.

Building on our strong relationship with the Institute for Education and the LeadershipColab initiative, we continued to run National Professional Qualifications within ten clusters. The programmes were extended into 2020/21 due to school closures in the Autumn Term. 112 staff members have completed the NPQ in Middle Leadership, with a further 273 continuing their studies. 36 have completed the NPQ in Senior Leadership, with

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

a further 178 continuing their studies. These programmes show our commitment to staff becoming highly effective leaders; building the skills, confidence, and knowledge to drive successful team performance and improve classroom practice.

This year we introduced two new programmes to our leadership development portfolio, the Aspiring to Headship programme and the Senior Leadership Programme. These are free, flexible, bespoke and webinar-based modular courses for talented, aspiring and recently appointed leaders. They are open to both academy and independent school staff within secondary. The programmes run from January to December, bringing together leadership expertise, theory and practice, immersed in educational context, in order to develop and accelerate our most talented leaders. 34 staff members are participating in the Aspiring to Headship programme and 73 are completing the Senior Leadership Programme. Both programmes were already web-based so we were able to continue to run them during lockdown.

In order to achieve our ambitions, we need a strong supply of talented Head Teachers that are able to operate at system level, whether as an Executive Head or in regional or national roles within the Group. Our System Leadership programme is a three-year initiative for those identified for potential systems/executive level leadership and is a central part of our growth strategy. The programme went from strength to strength in 2019/20, with the 7 participants in year three of the programme completing their training for ILM7 Executive Coaching and Mentoring. A further 16 commenced and completed year one of the programme, which included them taking part in personality profiling, behavioural interviews, development centres, coaching and two residential. The course sought to help leaders better understand the role of a system leader and support them with managing organisational and career transitions. In a change from the previous cohort, year two and three will see the participants completing the NPQ in Executive Leadership in partnership with UCL Institute of Education. During the summer term, we moved these programmes online so that participants could continue to follow them.

**Inclusion, Diversity and Equality**

A priority for the Group this year was to take major steps forward in creating a much more diverse and inclusive workforce, paying particular attention to supporting careers in leadership for those from a BAME background. We sought volunteers from within schools to gather views, ideas and input from BAME staff locally to feed back to the Executive Team. Following this, in June, we ran our first BAME Leaders Conference, aimed at Black and Minority Ethnic Middle and Senior Leaders. The aim of the conference was to explore the role of United Learning's minority ethnic leaders in supporting the Group in creating a more diverse and inclusive organisation. Over 100 Leaders attended the virtual event, setting actions designed to support colleagues in the Group-wide continuous improvement of this priority.

**United Teaching**

Our Initial Teacher Training Scheme, United Teaching continues to move forward strongly with a well-established programme for early career teachers. During 2019/20, we recruited 125 people to train to teach with United Teaching. 100% of trainees 'passed' and were recommended for Qualified Teaching Status.

We have retained the highest number of graduates of this programme into our schools with 81% returning to complete their NQT year.

Ahead of the 2020/21 academic year, a further 184 trainee teachers were recruited and attended our Summer Institutes in July and August.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**Partnership with Parents**

Communicating regularly with parents about their child's work and wellbeing is a core focus of every United Learning school. Our 2019 Learning from Parents Survey was completed by over 10,000 parents from across our academies and independent schools in both phases. Headline findings for the independents were:

- 97% of parents at secondary schools said they felt their child was safe at school;
- 97% of parents at secondary schools said their child's teachers treat them with respect;
- 99% of parents at prep schools said their child's teachers treat them with respect.

Parents were similarly supportive during the lockdown period with 84% of parents who responded to the June Pulse Survey saying that they felt the school cared about them, their child and their needs.

**Growth of the Group**

On 1 November 2019 the Charitable Company welcomed The Royal School – a co-educational day and boarding independent school in Surrey.

**Going Concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, including full consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the operations of the Charitable Company. The lockdown restrictions have resulted in all schools moving to remote learning for a proportion of both the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years. In recognition that pupils did not receive the full experience expected at an Independent school during the initial lock down period, a discount was awarded to all pupils for the 2020 Summer Term, resulting in a reduction in income for that year. Further income reductions resulted from lettings and hospitality being cancelled. Additional costs were incurred in areas such as property maintenance and cleaning to ensure schools are compliant with DfE COVID-secure guidance. The Charitable Company also set up a £4m COVID-19 Hardship Fund to support those families at our independent schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic. The Charitable Company has been able to offset the reduction of income and additional costs through making use of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ("CJRS") and through savings due to lower operating costs during lockdown.

The bank loans with Barclays which were due to mature on 31 March 2021 have been extended for a further year to 31 March 2022. Prior to the January 2021 lockdown, the financial results for the Charitable Company were in line with budget in terms of operating surplus and cash reserves. The forecast for the remainder of the year which includes a reduction of income and minimal use of the CJRS up until April when the scheme currently ends shows the operating results will be sufficient to remain within our banking facility and to meet the agreed banking covenants. Various cashflow scenarios have been modelled for the period to 31st August 2022. The worst-case scenario uses pessimistic assumptions including potential pupil number reductions resulting from a recession but also shows that in that scenario the Charitable Company is able to make sufficient cost savings to continue to have adequate cash reserves to meet its liabilities as they fall due during the forecast period. In preparing these forecasts, management have considered the different levers available to them which can improve working capital at the low points in the headroom available, notwithstanding that these remain positive throughout. The Charitable Company has available to it a wide range of contingency measures which it could use to reduce costs and/or realise funds should that prove necessary. Management have also considered the impact of the base and worst-case scenarios on debt covenants and concluded that these will not be breached. The different levers available to the Charitable Company have enabled management to conclude that the break point in the forecasts with the most uncertain assumptions is sufficiently unrealistic and remote that there is no material uncertainty in management's going concern assessment.

Therefore, based on the current financial position and latest forecasts, the robustness of cash flow

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

management and the level of financial reserves available in the cash flow scenarios, the Board of Trustees are confident that the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future, being at least twelve months from the date of approval of these financial statements. 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 Accounting Policies.

**Financial Review**

The total deficit for the year amounted to £3,247k (2019: surplus of £1,317k). Included within these results was an actuarial loss on defined benefit pension schemes and other pension commitments of £278k (2019: £947k).

The schools operated by the Charitable Company during the year were as follows:

AKS  
Ashford School  
Banstead Preparatory School  
Coworth Flexlands School  
Dunottar School  
Embley  
Guildford High School  
Hull Collegiate School  
Lincoln Minster School  
PHC Hitchin  
Rowan Preparatory School  
St. Ives (Haslemere)  
Surbiton High School  
The Royal School

The Charitable Company is a sponsor of ULT which is a subsidiary undertaking of the Charitable Company. ULT's aim is to found and manage academies under the government initiative. Academies opened to date are listed on the United Learning website.

**Funds**

The value of restricted funds to be utilised in future years includes £720k (2019: £531k) for prize and scholarship funds and other donated funds and £1,729k (2019: £1,729k) for the sponsorship fund. Unrestricted funds amount to £16,156k (2019: £19,592k) including designated funds of £3,747k (2019: £392k). The assets are held in pursuance of the Charitable Company's objectives.

**Plans for future periods**

The Charitable Company aims to continue to increase the number of pupils educated at its schools. This will be through organic growth and through mergers with other schools. The Charitable Company will continue to strive to improve the levels of performance of its students at all levels and will continue its efforts to ensure its primary students are well prepared for their secondary education and its secondary students are able to obtain jobs or a place in higher education, as they choose, once they leave its schools.

**Funding**

The Trustees are satisfied that the Charitable Company's assets attributable to each of its individual funds are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in relation to those funds.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**Risk assessments**

During the year under review, the Trustees and senior management have formally identified, and documented, the major risks to which the Charitable Company is exposed. Those risks have been reviewed by the Risk and Audit Committee and risk management strategies have been implemented. Risk management is embedded in the day to day processes of the Charitable Company and its subsidiaries.

Principal risk areas for the Charitable Company are the protection of pupils and employees, and of assets and data. Procedures and governance to minimise these risks are constantly being reviewed and updated.

**COVID-19 pandemic**

The Charitable Company has considered the live issues and future risks associated with the pandemic as part of the overall risk management framework and whilst enacting our Business Continuity plans at the start of lockdown. Each principal risk has been considered in light of the pandemic and additional mitigating actions and plans included accordingly.

**Safeguarding**

The Charitable Company has Safeguarding and Child Protection policies in place, which focus on the need to ensure that its pupils are safe, feel safe and are fully supported in this respect by their school. These policies, which are available online, also provide a framework for its schools to develop secure processes for identifying and supporting pupils at risk of abuse. The implementation and effectiveness of these policies and procedures, which adhere to Department for Education guidelines on safeguarding and child protection, are regularly monitored and reviewed. To further mitigate this risk, the Group has a central safeguarding officer.

**Health and Safety**

The Charitable Company recognises its position as employer and the health and safety duties this entails. Roles and responsibilities across the organisation are defined in the Group Health and Safety Management Policy and subsidiary topic policies exist to communicate and promote the standards expected of all the Charitable Company's schools to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and other non-employees alike. The implementation of these policies is regularly monitored, and any incidents of significance are investigated with the intention of preventing recurrence.

**Financial pressures**

The Charitable Company is reliant upon the parents paying its school fees promptly and an economic downturn could have a direct impact on parents' ability to pay their fees. The impact of the COVID-19 lockdown also may mean international travel restrictions and therefore boarding numbers may reduce. The political landscape is currently uncertain, Brexit and possible changes in business rate relief rules could have a significant impact on the cost base of the Charitable Company's schools. Senior management and the Trustees therefore aim to keep abreast of COVID-19 restrictions and the economic conditions both in the UK and abroad. Overheads are carefully monitored to ensure that resources are used effectively.

The markets in which the Charitable Company's schools operate are highly competitive. Consequently, the schools constantly review their processes to ensure that their pupils receive a first class education that helps them to perform to their full ability in all aspects of school life.

A large proportion of the Charitable Company's costs relate to staff salaries, which are relatively fixed each year. There is a risk that a significant drop in revenue or further increases in pension contributions may lead to an inability to cover such costs.

The Charitable Company also belongs to the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS") run by the relevant Local Authority for certain non-teaching staff. This is now a closed scheme relating to one school where

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

employees transferred as part of the conversion from a maintained school. Under the application of FRS 102, the contributions made by the Charitable Company to these funded defined benefit schemes currently results in pension deficits recorded in the Statement of Financial Activities. Under FRS 102, the Charitable Company is required to account for the requirement benefits when it is committed to provide them, even if the actual provision will be many years into the future. Whilst FRS 102 may be seen as a better reflection of the obligations of the employer to fund pension promises to employees, it does not reflect the actual accounting arrangements of the Pension Fund. It requires the Charitable Company to recognise the total value of all pension obligations that have accumulated (including deferred pensions) at 31 August each year.

A better reflection of a pension fund's actual position comes from the more detailed triennial assessment made by the fund actuary. This assesses and examines the ongoing financial position of the Pension Fund. The actuarial valuation can differ considerably from the FRS 102 valuation. It is the triennial actual valuation that is used to review contribution rates to the Fund from the Charitable Company, to ensure that existing assets and future contributions will be sufficient to meet future pension payments, and thus creates a risk in terms of increased contribution rates.

To mitigate these financial risks senior management closely monitor all costs, including increased pension contributions, against budgets on a monthly basis. Variance analysis is undertaken to consider the impact of varying income and costs when budgets are being prepared and through monthly management accounts and reforecasts, and action plans are prepared and implemented to address any adverse impacts. With regards to the LGPS risk we review the accounting reports prepared annually by the respective schemes' actuaries.

**Data protection**

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations, with information security policies covering the risk of breach or loss of access.

**Financial risk management objectives and policies**

The Charitable Company uses various financial instruments including cash and various items such as trade debtors and trade creditors that arise directly from its operations. The main purpose of these financial instruments is to raise finance for the Charitable Company's operations.

The main risks arising from the Charitable Company's financial instruments are liquidity risk and interest rate risk.

Financial risk management is managed by the Central Office Finance Department who act as the Charitable Company's treasury function ensuring that surplus funds are deposited to maximise interest receivable. In addition, it uses the Charitable Company's facilities in the most efficient manner. Those facilities are designed to ensure that the Charitable Company has sufficient available funds for day to day operations and for planned expansion and capital expenditure.

The Charitable Company seeks to manage financial risk by ensuring sufficient liquidity is available to meet foreseeable needs and to invest cash assets safely and profitably. Short term flexibility is achieved by overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company finances its operations through retained surpluses and overdraft facilities.

The Charitable Company is exposed to price risk in terms of fees but is content that these are in line with those in the sector, and budgets accordingly. The principal credit risk for the Charitable Company arises from its debtors. Payment terms are enforced by the Charitable Company's credit control department and debt collection is outsourced as necessary. Credit risk is further managed through regular contact with any families in financial difficulty in an effort to assist.

Liquidity and cash flow risks are managed through the appropriate and carefully managed use of financial

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

instruments with our principal bankers.

**Policies**

As part of managing our risks and to ensure good governance we outline some key policies below.

**Reserves**

It is the policy of the Charitable Company to hold reserves in its unrestricted funds, which have not yet been committed or designated for any particular purpose. The Trustees have set aside these reserves in order to protect the future operations of the Charitable Company from the effects of any unforeseen variations in its income streams as part of a policy of good financial management practice. The Trustees have set the level of these reserves after undertaking a thorough assessment of the Charitable Company's needs and have concluded that a level of six weeks' expenditure is prudent, which is approximately £13,547k. As at 31 August 2020, there were cash reserves of £8,254k (2019: £16,182k). Reserves defined as net current assets amount to £13,240k (2019: £16,390k).

**Investment policy**

The Charitable Company's cash reserves are used to set off against borrowings in other independent schools Group companies to minimise interest charges to the independent schools Group. Cash balances are invested with Barclays Bank. During the year the investment strategy produced returns in line with the Charitable Company's expectations and market rates.

**Environmental policy**

The Charitable Company recognises that good environmental management must be an integral and fundamental part of its corporate business strategy.

The Charitable Company believes that protection of the environment is an integral part of good educational practice. The Charitable Company is fully committed to its responsibility for minimising the environmental impacts of its operations, and will continuously aim to improve its environmental performance through the careful management of the Estate.

The Charitable Company seeks to engage all members of the school community to develop a sustainable approach to their work and activities so as to help it achieve its aims. The Charitable Company's commitment includes the environmentally prudent management of its buildings and operations, collaboration with suppliers to improve its indirect environmental impacts, and environmental programmes and education for its employees and pupils.

At the beginning of the academic year, United Learning made a commitment to becoming a carbon neutral organisation within ten years – by the end of the 2029-30 academic year. We are working with The Carbon Trust to conduct a carbon footprint assessment across our schools while also developing a Group-wide strategy to inform our prioritisation of areas to address. This will help inform both strategic efforts to minimise the daily impact of our carbon footprint – for example, through building maintenance – as well as how we continue to develop sustainability as an integral element of the curriculum in our schools. This work was paused in March as a result of COVID-19 but resumed over the summer.

As part of this work, all our schools have identified carbon neutral ambassadors whose remit is to share practice and ideas aimed at engaging pupils and staff in meeting our carbon neutral pledge.

**Pay policy for key management personnel**

Details of the pay policy in respect of key management personnel is included in the Governance section on page 18.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**Employee involvement and employment of the disabled**

Employees have been consulted on issues of concern to them by means of regular consultative committee and staff meetings and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by management. Regular meetings are held with staff in our schools to brief them on major issues and discuss local issues. Each school also ensures that all staff are kept fully briefed through a variety of mechanisms, including staff meetings, notice boards, newsletters and the Group intranet United Hub.

All new staff joining the Charitable Company are fully inducted and annually the Charitable Company runs two induction programmes, lasting two days, for all teachers new to United Learning. The Charitable Company carries out exit interviews for all staff leaving the organisation and has adopted a procedure of upward feedback for senior management and the Directors.

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

- Equal opportunities policy
- Volunteers' policy
- Health & safety policy

The Charitable Company has in place a National Recognition Agreement with the main teaching and support unions. Regular joint meetings of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) are held with this Group where matters of mutual interest are discussed and agreed upon.

The union members of the JNC report back to their members through locally appointed representatives. Each school also ensures all staff are kept fully briefed by using a variety of methods including staff meetings and newsletters.

In accordance with the Charitable Company's Equal Opportunities policy, the Charitable Company has long established fair employment practices in the recruitment, selection, retention and training of disabled staff.

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

Details of the Charitable Group's Gender Pay report can be found on its website at [unitedlearning.org.uk](http://unitedlearning.org.uk)

**Fundraising**

United Learning has a soft fundraising approach. In prior years, the Charitable Group has received large donations from individuals, but generally, we do not actively fundraise.

Our current approach is to work with partners and suppliers from time to time to offer fundraising packages for specific events and programmes such as our annual student and staff award ceremony and our Enterprise Programme.

Our schools occasionally fundraise for themselves or charities via events such as performances, non-school uniforms day and fêtes.

With the exception of the above, the Charitable Group does not contact or seek funding from the public or individuals, nor do we work with professional fundraisers. Occasionally, the Group is approached by trusts or individuals who are interested in working with us, and we will provide them with programme and funding information in order to explore funding opportunities that meet both parties' objectives and ethos. In prior years, we have submitted joint bid applications to trusts and funding bodies, such as the Department for Education and the Careers and Enterprise Company along with other charities.

We are members of the Fundraising Regulator Fundraising Preference Service to monitor our fundraising

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

complaints. We did not receive any complaints this year.

**Public benefit**

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit when reviewing the Charitable Company's aims and objectives and in planning future activities for the year.

The Charitable Company aims to educate as many young people as possible irrespective of their backgrounds.

The main strands to its work are:

- Sponsorship of Academies
- Bursaries and other financial assistance
- United Learning Partnership Team, nurturing collaboration between schools and giving students and staff exceptional academic, sporting and cultural experiences

As part of our commitment to public benefit, United Learning made the single biggest contribution of any organisation to the Oak National Academy – an online learning resource set up by the Government to support children learning remotely during the lockdown period.

Post year-end we led a series of DfE webinars for school leaders nationally on remote learning, followed by webinars for teachers. The Charitable Company has also joined the DfE 'EdTech' programme to provide technology support to other schools nationally.

**Academies**

The Charitable Company is the sponsor of, and works very closely with, ULT in managing a group of academies. Through interaction in all of the schools and academies, the two charitable companies work together to give pupils in these academies every opportunity to succeed during their education. This involves such activities as group meetings at every level to share best practice and the sharing of educational resources over United Hub.

**Access policy**

The Charitable Company works very hard to offer education to as many pupils as possible throughout England. Through its bursary policy, it widens the number of pupils attending UCST schools. By setting up, sponsoring, and working very closely with ULT, pupils in state funded academies enjoy the same educational resources available throughout the Charitable Company's schools. The Charitable Company's schools all access United Hub, which enables teachers at any of the schools in the Group to collaborate, share resources and challenges, positively impacting on workload.

**Bursary Policy**

The ability to offer education to children of families who would not be able to afford the school fees is very important to the Charitable Company. As a result of the desire to help children in this way the Charitable Company continued to operate its schemes of means tested financial assistance and its separate schemes of scholarships and family discounts, where parents have more than one child at one of our schools. Means tested assistance is available to those who would not otherwise be able to afford the fees and, equally importantly, in cases of hardship where pupil's education or future prospects might be at risk. Bursaries range in value from 5% to 100% of the school fee. During the year, the Charitable Company granted £1.56m (2019: £1.60m) to pupils attending its schools under means tested assistance. This equated to 1.41% of gross fees received (2019: 1.53%). Further details of our Bursary Policy and how to apply are on our website.

In addition during the year, the Charitable Company granted £0.5m of discounts and £0.6m of payment deferrals from the £4m Hardship Fund set up during lockdown to support those families at our independent

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

schools who found themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

**Section 172 Statement**

The Trustees fulfil their duty to promote the success of the Charitable Company under Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) and consider the interests of the Charitable Company's key stakeholders when making decisions as follows. The Charitable Company has a clear purpose which is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools that enable all young people to make a success of their lives. This requires the Board, senior leadership team and other employees to maintain an approach to strategic, financial and operational decision making that is values based and sustainable in approach, and therefore aligned to the requirements and expectations of Section 172. Our long-term success relies upon our delivering the strategic objectives described in the Trustees' report above through our talented and committed employees; close working relationships with regulators and suppliers, providing benefits to both the pupils in our schools and the wider school community.

In the light of our purpose and strategy as set out in the Trustees' Report our Trustees take steps to understand the needs and priorities of each stakeholder group and do so via a number of mediums, including by direct engagement through school visits and discussions with employees; employee, parent and pupil surveys; and via committees and forums.

Strategic priorities are discussed with the Board at the start of each year. These are informed by our long-term vision, the outcomes for pupils and other key performance measures from the previous year and the outcomes of our stakeholder surveys. The Board sets key performance indicators and targets relating to these priorities and monitor performance against these at each Group Board meeting.

At Board meetings, the Trustees receive reports summarising the current status of each of our schools and highlighting any notable successes or concerns. Sub-committees, as described in the Governance Statement, meet to enable scrutiny of a wider range of data and reports and to review progress against the strategic objectives.

The Board has designated a named Trustee to act as the key link between the Board and LGBs, and with the education teams. The Board has also identified link Trustees for safeguarding, people, health & safety and estates, finance and information governance. Link Trustees attend relevant meetings of the executive and speak regularly with relevant key employees to provide regular oversight and ensure they understand the key issues facing the organisation and how these are being tackled.

All Trustees are invited to visit schools on a regular basis. These visits are generally scheduled alongside education teams so that they are able to observe the way in which Regional Directors/Education Directors engage with senior school staff in pursuing improvement priorities. Their notes of visits are shared with the Executive and with the Board.

The Charitable Company is regulated by the Charity Commission and has due regard to the Commission's guidance. The Trust is regulated by the Information Commissioner's Officer ("ICO"), and policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations, which have been shared with the ICO.

The Trustees consider relationships with suppliers through the oversight of the Group procurement policy and Modern Slavery statement. The impact of the Charitable Company's operations on the community is referred to in the Environmental Policy in the Trustees' report.

The outcomes of this engagement with our stakeholders informs Board decision making as described in the Trustees' report above.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)****TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020****Governance**

The Board of Trustees have delegated their powers and functions to a committee of Trustees known as the Group Board. All the Trustees of United Church Schools Trust ("UCST") are members of the Group Board. Members of the Group Board also include persons who are Trustees of United Learning Trust ("ULT"), a subsidiary Charitable Company. The Group Board of Directors has formally met 9 times during the year and the UCST Board of Trustees held 3 independent meetings. Attendance during the year at the meetings of the Trustees was as follows:

	<b>Group Board meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>	<b>UCST meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Ms Mary Curnock Cook	9	9	3	3
Dr Ros Given-Wilson	7	9	3	3
Mr Ben Gordon	9	9	2	3
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	9	9	3	3
The Very Rev John Hall	6	7	2	2
Mr Mike Litchfield	8	9	3	3
Mrs Sarah Squire	9	9	3	3

The Board of Trustees delegates clear responsibilities to the Schools' Local Governing Bodies ("LGBs"), whose purpose is to provide support and challenge to the school on behalf of the Board. The functions and duties of the LGBs are set out in the LGB Members' Handbook. The Group Board maintains links with the LGBs through the Company Secretary, and designated Trustees for the schools. The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the LGBs are invited to attend meetings of the Education Board, which meet three times in the academic year and provide advice on strategy and education, relevant continuing professional development and the opportunity for sharing of best practice with their peers. The Education Board meetings further enhance communications between LGBs and the Trustees.

An external review of Board effectiveness has been completed and outcomes are currently under review by Trustees. This was due to take place in May and June 2020 but was deferred due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Each Committee has also considered its effectiveness, terms of reference and cycle of business and made any appropriate adjustments.

**Board Committees**

The Group Board has four committees, which advise on matters defined by their terms of reference. The Committees are the Finance Committee, the Risk and Audit Committee, the Nominations and Remuneration Committee and the Education Standards and Performance Committee. The minutes of all committees are made available to the Board of Directors at meetings of the Group Board and any matters of concern are highlighted.

The Finance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Charitable Company properly plans the use of its finances and is adequately funded to undertake projected expenditure;
- review and recommend the annual budgets for approval by the Board of Trustees;
- monitor financial performance against agreed budgets;
- ensure, with the Risk and Audit Committee, that the Charitable Company's financial statements are supported accurately by management accounts;
- monitor and review the Charitable Company's arrangements in relation to investments and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees in relation to the appointment and removal of investment advisors.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)****TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

Attendance at meetings during the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Neil Davidson (Chair)	4	4
Dr Stephen Critchley	3	4
Mr Michael George	4	4
Mr Ben Gordon	4	4
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	4	4
Mr Mike Litchfield	4	4

The Risk and Audit Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure implementation of a risk management framework for the Group and to review disaster recovery/business continuity planning;
- ensure the Charities' annual financial statements are reconciled to the management accounts;
- ensure effective audit functions are in place (both external and internal);
- ensure adequate risk management processes are in place;
- ensure an adequate internal control environment is established.

The Chair of the Risk & Audit Committee, Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas stood down at the end of his term. Mr Neil MacDonald was appointed as Chair from 1 April 2020. Ms Mary Curnock Cook joined the Committee in May 2020.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas (Chair)	3	3
Mrs Karen Bowles	6	6
Dr Stephen Critchley	5	6
Ms Mary Curnock Cook	3	3
Mr David D'Arcy Hughes	6	6
Mr Neil MacDonald	6	6

A Group Nominations and Remuneration Committee exists to oversee the appointments of the Group Chairman and Directors and to approve Executive salaries and remuneration. The Committee is chaired by the Chair of the Group Board and it is advised by the Director of HR and the Company Secretary as appropriate.

The Nominations and Remuneration Committee regularly reviews the terms of office, skills and attributes of the Board of Directors. On the basis of this, the Committee plans succession in order to ensure that the Board has available to it the range of skills and experience required to discharge its responsibilities. The Committee makes recommendations to the Board as to the need for new Directors and leads the process of recruitment of Directors as required, making recommendations of appointment to the Board. The Committee ensures that appointment is on merit, but also seeks to ensure that the Board reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

In considering Executive pay, the Committee takes account of the needs of the organisation for skills, experience and personal capabilities to enable it to achieve its objectives and the price of such skills in the labour market. The Committee considers that in order to attract and retain leaders with the skills to achieve organisational objectives, senior pay must be competitive in the marketplace, taking account of the pay rates of comparably senior and skilled employees in other organisations – particularly in comparable organisations in education, in public service and in the charitable sector, and taking account of the transferability of skills into other sectors. The Committee is also mindful of the need for charities and organisations in receipt of public funding to set pay rates which are publicly defensible and seen to be appropriate.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)****TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

The Committee considers annual pay in relation to the performance of the organisation, and of individuals against their objectives and in their broader contribution and in any changes to job role.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Mr Richard Greenhalgh (Chair)	2	2
Mr Ben Gordon	2	2
Mr David Robinson	1	1
Mrs Sarah Squire	2	2

The Group Education Standards and Performance Committee's purpose is to:

- ensure that the Trust discharges its responsibilities for education improvement in providing excellent education so that pupils are able to progress, achieve and to go on to succeed in life;
- advise the Group Board with respect to Group strategic educational priorities and key performance indicators;
- provide an overview, scrutiny and challenge of education performance of all schools;
- receive reports from the Executive regarding education standards and performance of schools, and to hold the Executive to account, against the approved Group strategic priorities and key performance indicators related to schools' educational performance;
- review annually the performance of local/cluster governing bodies to ensure they are operating at maximum effectiveness;
- receive reports from Executive regarding safeguarding, and to hold the Executive to account regarding the effectiveness of policies and process designed to keep children safe.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Committee member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Dame Yasmin Bevan (Chair)	3	3
Sir Jon Coles	2	3
Ms Mary Curnock Cook	3	3
Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson	3	3
Mr Richard Greenhalgh	3	3
Dame Reena Keeble	2	3

**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 ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Charitable Company's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Charitable Company for the year from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020 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 Charitable Company is exposed, including those risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, 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 Charitable Company's significant risks that has

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

been in place for the year from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

The Charitable Group has a risk register that identifies the key strategic risks facing the Group, the actions taken to mitigate those risks and the owners of those actions. Risk control is exercised by the senior management team, which reviews the risk register on a monthly basis. The Risk and Audit Committee considers the risk register at each of their meetings. Its views are reported to the Board of Trustees via the Committee's minutes and the Chair's report to the Group Board.

**The Risk and Control Framework**

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

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

The Group employs an Internal Auditor and a Head of Internal Audit who have a direct reporting line to the Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee. The Internal Audit service operates best practice professional standards and guidelines. Internal Audit independently and objectively reviews, on a continuous basis, the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Charitable Company's objectives, and contributes to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

Internal Audit's role includes giving advice on internal controls and performing a range of checks on the Charitable Company's core financial systems. Checks carried out in the year included testing of school level key controls, covering local governance, procurement, income, cash management, human resources, payroll and fixed assets. Furthermore, testing of non-financial systems and departments was conducted, including reviews of the organisation's counter-fraud arrangements, estates management, strategic planning and Freedom of Information and subject access requests.

On a quarterly basis, the Head of Internal Audit reports to the Board of Directors through the Risk and Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Directors' financial responsibilities.

The internal audit plan for the year ended 31 August 2020 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and could not be fully completed. The furloughing of internal audit staff for a period of time also resulted in a reduction of available audit days. In April 2020, Internal Audit ceased work on any audit assignments which created an unnecessary pressure on schools and central office functions which led to the postponement of eleven school audits and four central office reviews. Short-term prioritisation and regular reviews of the audit plan took place and from June 2020 onwards internal audit continued to deliver its ongoing assurance activities by conducting audits remotely where possible. 59% of the original audit plan was delivered providing a sufficient level of coverage across schools and central office to provide an annual opinion. For the year ended 31 August 2020, based on the work undertaken, an internal audit opinion of reasonable assurance was given on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

These arrangements can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**Chief Executive**

The Trustees delegate the day to day responsibility of the running of the Charitable Company to the Chief Executive Officer.

**Connected charities**

There is a relationship between United Church Schools Trust (Limited by Guarantee) and other charities as set out in note 26.

**Statement of Trustees' (collectively known as the Board) responsibilities**

The Trustees (who are also directors of United Church Schools Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law), including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. 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 the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charitable Company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charitable Company will continue in operation.

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 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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**Disclosure of information to auditor**

Each of the persons who are Trustees at the time when this Trustees' report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as each Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charitable Company's auditor is unaware, and
- the Trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charitable Company's auditor is aware of that information.

This report was approved by the Trustees, on 4 February 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

*Rosalind Given-Wilson*

Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson, Chair  
Trustee

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

---

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of United Church Schools Trust (the 'Charitable Company') for the year ended 31 August 2020 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 and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Charitable Company's affairs as at 31 August 2020 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.

**Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the 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.

**The impact of macro-economic uncertainties on our audit**

Our audit of the financial statements requires us to obtain an understanding of all relevant uncertainties, including those arising as a consequence of the effects of macro-economic uncertainties such as COVID-19 and Brexit. All audits assess and challenge the reasonableness of estimates made by the directors and the related disclosures and the appropriateness of the going concern basis of preparation of the financial statements. All of these depend on assessments of the future economic environment and the Charitable Company's future prospects and performance.

COVID-19 and Brexit are amongst the most significant economic events currently faced by the UK, and at the date of this report their effects are subject to unprecedented levels of uncertainty, with the full range of possible outcomes and their impacts unknown. We applied a standardised firm-wide approach in response to these uncertainties when assessing the Charitable Company's future prospects and performance. However, no audit should be expected to predict the unknowable factors or all possible future implications for a Charitable Company associated with these particular events.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST  
(CONTINUED)**

---

**Conclusions relating to going concern**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the charitable company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In our evaluation of the trustees' conclusions, we considered the risks associated with the Charitable Company's business model, including effects arising from Brexit, and analysed how those risks might affect the Charitable Company's financial resources or ability to continue operations over the period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue. In accordance with the above, we have nothing to report in these respects.

However, as we cannot predict all future events or conditions and as subsequent events may result in outcomes that are inconsistent with judgements that were reasonable at the time they were made, the absence of reference to a material uncertainty in this auditor's report is not a guarantee that the Charitable Company will continue in operation.

**Other information**

The Trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual report, other than the financial statements and our Auditor's report thereon. 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. 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.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST  
(CONTINUED)**

---

**Matter on which we are required to report under the Companies Act 2006**

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

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which 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, set out on pages 20 to 21, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

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

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](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our Auditor's report.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST  
(CONTINUED)**

---

**Use of our report**

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

*Grant Thornton UK LLP*

**Gareth Norris ACA (Senior statutory auditor)**

for and on behalf of

**Grant Thornton UK LLP**

Statutory Auditor  
Chartered Accountants

Milton Keynes

Date: 15/2/2021

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

	Note	Restricted funds 2020 £000	Unrestricted funds 2020 £000	Continuing operations 2020 £000	Total funds 2020 £000	Continuing operations 2019 £000	Discontinued operations 2019 £000	Total funds 2019 £000
<b>Income from:</b>								
Donations and legacies	4	189	(1,962)	(1,773)	(1,773)	3,751	164	3,915
Charitable activities	2, 3	-	116,243	116,243	116,243	110,479	1,977	112,456
<b>Total income</b>		<b>189</b>	<b>114,281</b>	<b>114,470</b>	<b>114,470</b>	<b>114,230</b>	<b>2,141</b>	<b>116,371</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>								
Charitable activities	5	-	117,403	117,403	117,403	111,709	2,398	114,107
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>117,403</b>	<b>117,403</b>	<b>117,403</b>	<b>111,709</b>	<b>2,398</b>	<b>114,107</b>
<b>Net income before other recognised gains and losses</b>		<b>189</b>	<b>(3,122)</b>	<b>(2,933)</b>	<b>(2,933)</b>	<b>2,521</b>	<b>(257)</b>	<b>2,264</b>
Actuarial (loss)/gain on defined benefit pension schemes and other pension commitments	24	-	(278)	(278)	(278)	(947)	-	(947)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>189</b>	<b>(3,400)</b>	<b>(3,211)</b>	<b>(3,211)</b>	<b>1,574</b>	<b>(257)</b>	<b>1,317</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

	<b>Restricted funds 2020</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds 2020</b>	<b>Continuing operations 2020</b>	<b>Total funds 2020</b>	<i>Continuing operations 2019</i>	<i>Discontinued operations 2019</i>	<i>Total funds 2019</i>
<b>Note</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>	<i>£000</i>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>							
Total funds brought forward	2,260	19,592	21,852	21,852	20,535	-	20,535
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>2,449</b>	<b>16,192</b>	<b>18,641</b>	<b>18,641</b>	<i>22,109</i>	<i>(257)</i>	<i>21,852</i>

The notes on pages 32 to 60 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)  
REGISTERED NUMBER: 02780748

**BALANCE SHEET  
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2020**

	Note	2020 £000	2019 £000
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	10	2,230	1,919
Tangible assets	11	5,558	5,858
Investments	12	217	36
		<u>8,005</u>	<u>7,813</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stocks	13	13	14
Debtors	14	58,415	56,720
Cash and cash equivalents	20	8,254	16,182
		<u>66,682</u>	<u>72,916</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	(53,406)	(56,526)
		<u>13,276</u>	<u>16,390</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>13,276</u>	<u>16,390</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<u>21,281</u>	<u>24,203</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	24	(2,640)	(2,351)
<b>Net assets including pension scheme liabilities</b>		<u>18,641</u>	<u>21,852</u>
<b>Charity funds</b>			
Restricted funds	17	2,449	2,260
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted funds excluding pension asset	17	18,832	21,943
Pension reserve	17	(2,640)	(2,351)
		<u>16,192</u>	<u>19,592</u>
Total unrestricted funds	17	<u>16,192</u>	<u>19,592</u>
<b>Total funds</b>		<u>18,641</u>	<u>21,852</u>

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)  
REGISTERED NUMBER: 02780748**

---

**BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)  
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 4 February 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

*Rosalind Given-Wilson*

**Dr Rosalind Given-Wilson**

The notes on pages 32 to 60 form part of these financial statements.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

	Note	2020 £000	2019 £000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash used in operating activities	19	(3,439)	917
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of intangible fixed assets		(436)	(764)
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(886)	(2,004)
Net cash acquired in business combinations		2	622
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(1,320)</b>	<b>(2,146)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Repayment of borrowing		(2,626)	-
Interest paid		(543)	(581)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		<b>(3,169)</b>	<b>(581)</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>(7,928)</b>	<b>(1,810)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		16,182	17,992
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	20	<b>8,254</b>	<b>16,182</b>

The notes on pages 32 to 60 form part of these financial statements

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020****1. Accounting policies****1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - 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) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

United Church Schools Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

**1.2 Consolidation**

Consolidated financial statements have not been prepared as consolidated financial statements for the Charitable Company's ultimate parent undertaking, United Church Schools Foundation Limited, are publicly available from the Charitable Company's registered office and incorporate the results of the Charitable Company and its subsidiary undertakings. These financial statements therefore represent the results of United Church Schools Trust only.

**1.3 Income**

All income is recognised once the Charitable Company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donated services or facilities are recognised when the Charitable Company has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the Charitable Company of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the Charitable Company which is the amount the Charitable Company would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Bursaries and discounts awarded are charged in the year to which they relate, and are offset against the associated income.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)****1.4 Expenditure**

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

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities. Charitable activities are costs incurred in the Charitable Company's educational operations. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the Charitable Company and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

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

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

**1.5 Fund accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Company for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

**1.6 Company status**

The Charitable Company is a company limited by guarantee. United Church Schools Foundation Limited (Company number 00018582) is the ultimate parent undertaking and sole member of the Charitable Company. In the event of the Charitable Company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charitable Company.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.7 Going concern**

The Directors assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate, considering whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Charitable Company to continue as a going concern. The Directors make this assessment in respect of a period at least one year from the signing date of these financial statements. The Directors have considered the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in reaching their conclusions, preparing an annual budget and monitoring performance against it with forecasts for the balance of the financial year and beyond, and preparing a range of cash flow forecast scenarios. The Charitable Company maintains reserves to meet unexpected obligations and forecast models indicate that, even allowing for the economic impacts of the pandemic, the Charitable Company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The financial statements have therefore been prepared on a going concern basis as discussed in the Directors' Report on pages 9 and 10.

**1.8 Intangible fixed assets and amortisation**

Intangible assets are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment. Amortisation begins when the intangible asset is available for use, and is charged straight line over the useful economic life of 8 - 10 years.

**1.9 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives.

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Leasehold improvements	- Term of the lease
Motor vehicles	- 4 years
Fixtures and fittings	- 10 years
Computer equipment	- 3 years

Tangible assets donated to the Charitable Company are capitalised based on their fair values which then represents the deemed historic cost of the asset.

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.

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

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020****1. Accounting policies (continued)****1.10 Investments**

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as 'Gains/(Losses) on investments' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

**1.11 Stocks**

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks.

**1.12 Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charitable Company; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

**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 Taxation**

The Charitable Company is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Charitable Company is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

**1.15 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.

**1.16 Cash and cash equivalents**

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

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)****1.17 Liabilities and Provisions**

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 Charitable Company anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar charges.

**1.18 Financial instruments**

The Charitable Company only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors, loans from banks and other third parties, loans to related parties and investments in non-puttable ordinary shares.

Financial assets that are measured at cost and amortised cost are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

For financial assets measured at amortised cost, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. If a financial asset has a variable interest rate, the discount rate for measuring any impairment loss is the current effective interest rate determined under the contract.

For financial assets measured at cost less impairment, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between an asset's carrying amount and best estimate, which is an approximation of the amount that the Charitable Company would receive for the asset if it were to be sold at the balance sheet date.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset and the net amount reported in the Balance Sheet when there is an enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020****1. Accounting policies (continued)****1.19 Pensions**

The Charitable Company make contributions to a number of defined contribution pension plans for non-teaching staff and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charitable Company to the fund in respect of the year.

Retirement benefits to teaching staff are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS"). Retirement benefits to certain support staff are provided by 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 Charitable Company 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. As stated in note 24, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore 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 scheme and assets are held separately from those of the Charitable Company 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 high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each Balance Sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred. Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in other recognised gains and losses.

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

**1.20 Government Grants**

Government grant income from the coronavirus job retention scheme is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the grant income, receipt is probable, and its amount can be measured reliably.

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**1. Accounting policies (continued)****1.21 Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty**

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

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

*Actuarial valuations for Local Government Pension Scheme*

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost/(income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 24, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2020. 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.

*Unfunded pension obligations*

The Charitable Company has also made provision for unfunded pension obligations. The key assumptions made in computing this provision comprise mortality assumptions and discount rates, with the total obligation arising as a result having been disclosed in note 24. Any changes in these assumptions would impact the carrying amount of the liability.

*Depreciation of tangible fixed assets*

Depreciation is computed based on the best estimate of the useful economic lives of the relevant assets and their ultimate residual value.

*Provision for bad debts*

An allowance for doubtful debts is maintained for estimated losses resulting from the inability of the Charitable Company's fee debtors to make required payments. The Charitable Company applies a policy for providing for bad debts which is periodically reviewed based on an assessment of actual outcomes against those expected.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.22 Exceptional items**

Costs classified as exceptional relate to costs which are non-recurring and outside of the normal charitable activities of the company as disclosed in note 9.

**2. School fees receivable and catering income**

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Gross fee income receivable	<b>110,708</b>	<i>104,404</i>
Scholarships, bursaries and reduced fees	<b>(15,142)</b>	<i>(10,166)</i>
Catering income	<b>1,420</b>	<i>2,024</i>
<b>Net fee income receivable</b>	<b>96,986</b>	<i>96,262</i>

In 2020, of the total school fees receivable and catering income, £96,986k (2019: £96,347k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2019: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**3. Other educational related income**

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Support services to other schools and academies	<b>11,900</b>	<i>10,286</i>
Income from Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	<b>3,529</b>	<i>-</i>
Early years funding	<b>74</b>	<i>85</i>
Pupil registration fees	<b>260</b>	<i>276</i>
Charges for additional classes	<b>1,002</b>	<i>1,039</i>
Charges for school trips	<b>1,555</b>	<i>3,009</i>
Other school income	<b>684</b>	<i>1,211</i>
Rents and lettings	<b>253</b>	<i>288</i>
	<b>19,257</b>	<i>16,194</i>

In 2020, of the other educational related income, £19,257k (2019: £16,109k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2019: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**4. Voluntary income**

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Other sponsorship and donations received	<b>2,607</b>	<i>3,394</i>
Gift aid from subsidiary undertakings	-	<i>1,187</i>
Gift aid - COVID-19 donations	<b>10</b>	-
Net liabilities transferred from other charities	<b>(4,390)</b>	<i>(666)</i>
	<b>(1,773)</b>	<i>3,915</i>

In 2020, of the total voluntary income, £(1,962k) (2019: £3,882) was to unrestricted funds and £189k (2019: £33k) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**5. Analysis of total resources expended**

	Staff costs 2020 £000	Other costs 2020 £000	Depreciation 2020 £000	Total 2020 £000	<i>Total 2019 £000</i>
<b>Schools operating costs</b>					
Educational supplies	63,252	6,573	-	<b>69,825</b>	65,706
Recruitment and support	-	377	-	<b>377</b>	383
Staff development	-	32	-	<b>32</b>	55
Examination fees	-	77	-	<b>77</b>	85
Technology costs	3,352	1,938	-	<b>5,290</b>	4,982
Premises costs	4,380	10,049	-	<b>14,429</b>	14,896
Insurance	-	467	-	<b>467</b>	490
Catering	26	3,867	-	<b>3,893</b>	5,391
Marketing	895	1,476	-	<b>2,371</b>	2,372
Legal and professional	-	895	-	<b>895</b>	1,140
Other support costs	13,048	4,147	-	<b>17,195</b>	15,187
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	1,583	<b>1,583</b>	1,869
Loss on disposal of operations	-	-	-	-	526
Bank interest and charges	-	643	-	<b>643</b>	692
	<u>84,953</u>	<u>30,541</u>	<u>1,583</u>	<u>117,077</u>	<u>113,774</u>
<b>Governance costs</b>					
Auditor costs - audit fees	-	48	-	<b>48</b>	47
Company Secretariat costs	242	35	-	<b>277</b>	283
Trustees' meeting and travel	-	1	-	<b>1</b>	3
	<u>85,195</u>	<u>30,625</u>	<u>1,583</u>	<u>117,403</u>	<u>114,107</u>
<b>Total 2020</b>	<u>85,195</u>	<u>30,625</u>	<u>1,583</u>	<u>117,403</u>	<u>114,107</u>
<i>Total 2019</i>	<u>75,910</u>	<u>36,328</u>	<u>1,869</u>	<u>114,107</u>	

In 2020, of the total resources expended, £117,403k (2019: £114,107k) was to unrestricted funds and £NIL (2019: £NIL) was to restricted funds.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

Total resources expended include:

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Auditor's remuneration:		
Audit of the charitable company's annual financial statements	48	47
Non-audit services	8	8
Depreciation:		
Tangible fixed assets, owned	1,458	1,744
Amortisation:		
Intangible fixed assets	125	125
Loss on disposal of operations	-	526
Operating lease rentals	1,155	1,311
	<u>1,155</u>	<u>1,311</u>
<b>6. Net interest</b>		
	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Interest payable to Group undertakings	543	581
	<u>543</u>	<u>581</u>
<b>7. Staff costs</b>		
	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Wages and salaries	67,992	62,580
Social security costs	6,202	5,657
Other pension costs (note 24)	10,650	7,167
Agency fees	351	506
	<u>85,195</u>	<u>75,910</u>

During the year, there were redundancy or termination payments made which amounted to £506k (2019: £280k).

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

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>No.</b>	<i>No.</i>
	<b>2,550</b>	<i>2,403</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**7. Staff costs (continued)**

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

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>No.</b>	<i>No.</i>
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	<b>54</b>	<i>43</i>
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	<b>15</b>	<i>16</i>
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	<b>10</b>	<i>13</i>
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	<b>15</b>	<i>7</i>
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	<b>7</b>	<i>2</i>
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	<b>4</b>	<i>5</i>
In the band £120,001 - £130,000	<b>3</b>	<i>2</i>
In the band £130,001 - £140,000	<b>-</b>	<i>2</i>
In the band £140,001 - £150,000	<b>2</b>	<i>2</i>
In the band £150,001 - £160,000	<b>-</b>	<i>2</i>
In the band £160,001 - £170,000	<b>4</b>	<i>1</i>
In the band £170,001 - £180,000	<b>1</b>	<i>2</i>
In the band £180,001 - £190,000	<b>1</b>	<i>-</i>
In the band £220,001 - £230,000	<b>-</b>	<i>1</i>
In the band £230,001 - £240,000	<b>1</b>	<i>-</i>
In the band £240,001 - £250,000	<b>-</b>	<i>1</i>
In the band £250,001 - £260,000	<b>1</b>	<i>-</i>
	<b>=====</b>	<i>=====</i>

Key management personnel, as listed on page 1, are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity. The remuneration for these individuals totalled £1,315k (2019: £1,430k).

During the year, the following amounts were paid in respect of higher paid employees as shown above:

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Pension contributions to defined contribution, teachers' pension scheme and local government pension schemes	<b>1,771</b>	<i>1,166</i>
	<b>=====</b>	<i>=====</i>

During the year, 27 higher paid employees (2019: 25) participated in defined contribution schemes, 87 (2019: 71) participated in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (operated by the Teachers' Pension Agency), 2 (2019: 1) participated in the Local Government Pension Scheme and 2 (2019: 2) did not participate in Charitable Company pension schemes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020****Payment to Trustees**

No Trustee, or person with a family or business connection with a Trustee, received remuneration in the year, directly or indirectly, from either the Charitable Company or a company controlled by the Charitable Company.

Expense reimbursements paid to 2 (2019: 3) Trustees during the year amounted to £1k (2019: £3k) and all related to travel and subsistence costs.

**8. Interest on Local Government Pension Scheme**

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Interest on pension scheme liabilities	<b>(165)</b>	<i>(211)</i>
Interest income on pension scheme assets	<b>139</b>	<i>194</i>
	<b><u>(26)</u></b>	<i><u>(17)</u></i>

**9. Exceptional items**

On 1 November 2019, the Charitable Company welcomed The Royal School Haslemere.

Exceptional costs incurred in school mergers, acquisitions and disposals during the year ended 31 August 2020 amounted to £211k (2019: £354k).

Exceptional costs incurred in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak during the year ended 31 August 2020 amounted to £2,074k.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**10. Intangible assets**

	<b>Software development £000</b>
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 September 2019	2,140
Additions	436
At 31 August 2020	2,576
<b>Amortisation</b>	
At 1 September 2019	221
Charge for the year	125
At 31 August 2020	346
<b>Net book value</b>	
At 31 August 2020	2,230
<i>At 31 August 2019</i>	1,919

All intangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**11. Tangible fixed assets**

	Long-term leasehold property £000	Fixtures and fittings £000	Computer equipment £000	Motor vehicles £000	Total £000
<b>Cost</b>					
At 1 September 2019	1,785	9,920	4,888	626	17,219
Additions	83	590	203	10	886
Transfers from other charities	-	218	7	47	272
Disposals	-	(18)	-	(58)	(76)
Transfers between classes	-	191	(191)	-	-
At 31 August 2020	<u>1,868</u>	<u>10,901</u>	<u>4,907</u>	<u>625</u>	<u>18,301</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 September 2019	629	6,097	4,077	558	11,361
Charge for the year	183	763	464	48	1,458
On disposals	-	(18)	-	(58)	(76)
At 31 August 2020	<u>812</u>	<u>6,842</u>	<u>4,541</u>	<u>548</u>	<u>12,743</u>
<b>Net book value</b>					
At 31 August 2020	<u><u>1,056</u></u>	<u><u>4,059</u></u>	<u><u>366</u></u>	<u><u>77</u></u>	<u><u>5,558</u></u>
At 31 August 2019	<u><u>1,156</u></u>	<u><u>3,823</u></u>	<u><u>811</u></u>	<u><u>68</u></u>	<u><u>5,858</u></u>

All tangible fixed assets were used for charitable purposes.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**12. Fixed asset investments**

		<b>Listed investments £000</b>
<b>Valuation</b>		
At 1 September 2019		<b>36</b>
Transfers from other charities		<b>181</b>
<b>At 31 August 2020</b>		<b>217</b>
	<b>2020 £000</b>	<b>2019 £000</b>
<b>Investments at value comprise:</b>		
Listed investments	<b>217</b>	<b>36</b>

All the fixed asset investments are held in the UK.

**Subsidiary undertakings**

At 31 August 2020, the Charitable Company held more than 20% of the following:

	Holding	Nature of the business	Class of share capital held
	%		
St. Ives (Haslemere) Limited*	100	Dormant	-
United Learning Trust*	100	Education	-
Bradtime Limited**	100	Dormant	Ordinary £1
Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited*	100	Dormant	-

\*Limited by guarantee

\*\*Dissolved on 22 September 2020

The registered office address of St. Ives (Haslemere) Limited, United Learning Trust, Bradtime Limited and Priory School (Banstead) Trust Limited is Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, England, PE3 6SB.

**13. Stocks**

	<b>2020 £000</b>	<b>2019 £000</b>
Finished goods and goods for resale	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**14. Debtors**

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Trade debtors	<b>30,943</b>	<i>30,620</i>
Amounts owed by Group undertakings	<b>23,051</b>	<i>21,253</i>
Other debtors	<b>2,677</b>	<i>3,054</i>
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>1,744</b>	<i>1,793</i>
	<b>58,415</b>	<i>56,720</i>

**15. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Trade creditors	<b>2,453</b>	<i>3,997</i>
Amounts owed to Group undertakings	<b>6</b>	<i>9</i>
Other taxation and social security	<b>1,744</b>	<i>1,624</i>
Other creditors	<b>12,516</b>	<i>14,394</i>
Accruals and deferred income	<b>36,687</b>	<i>36,502</i>
	<b>53,406</b>	<i>56,526</i>

Amounts owed to Group undertakings are unsecured, interest free and repayable on demand.

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Deferred income at 1 September 2019	<b>33,314</b>	<i>31,837</i>
Resources deferred during the year	<b>33,100</b>	<i>33,314</i>
Amounts released from previous periods	<b>(33,314)</b>	<i>(31,837)</i>
<b>Deferred income as at 31 August 2020</b>	<b>33,100</b>	<i>33,314</i>

Deferred income relates to fees invoiced in advance for the Autumn term.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**16. Acquisitions and disposals**

On 1 November 2019, United Church Schools Trust acquired the trade and certain assets and liabilities of the former The Royal School Haslemere for £nil consideration. The fair values at the acquisition date of each class of assets and liabilities were as follows:

	<b>Book value £000</b>	<b>Fair value £000</b>
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible	272	272
Investments	181	181
	453	453
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	332	332
Cash and cash equivalents	2	2
	787	787
<b>Total assets</b>		
<b>Creditors</b>		
Due within one year	(3,310)	(3,310)
Bank overdraft	(1,794)	(1,794)
Due after more than one year	(73)	(73)
	(4,390)	(4,390)
<b>Total identifiable net liabilities</b>	(4,390)	(4,390)

Of the net liabilities acquired, £4,579k were from unrestricted funds in deficit, and £189k were from restricted funds.

There was no consideration paid, and the net liabilities acquired have therefore been recorded within voluntary income as shown in note 4.

Property held by the former charity was transferred separately to the parent charity, United Church Schools Foundation Limited, for £nil consideration.

The impact of acquired operations on the Statement of Financial Activities since acquisition is as follows:

	<b>£000</b>
Income from donations and legacies	404
Income from charitable activities	4,588
Expenditure on charitable activities	(5,908)
	(916)
	(916)

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**17. Statement of funds**

**Statement of funds - current year**

	Balance at 1 September 2019 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/(out) £000	Gains/ (losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2020 £000
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
<b>Designated funds</b>						
Designated funds	392	(474)	(171)	4,000	-	3,747
<b>General funds</b>						
General Funds - all funds	21,551	114,755	(117,221)	(4,000)	-	15,085
Pension reserve	(2,351)	-	(11)	-	(278)	(2,640)
	<u>19,200</u>	<u>114,755</u>	<u>(117,232)</u>	<u>(4,000)</u>	<u>(278)</u>	<u>12,445</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>19,592</u>	<u>114,281</u>	<u>(117,403)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(278)</u>	<u>16,192</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>						
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	531	189	-	-	-	720
	<u>2,260</u>	<u>189</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,449</u>
<b>Total of funds</b>	<u><u>21,852</u></u>	<u><u>114,470</u></u>	<u><u>(117,403)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>(278)</u></u>	<u><u>18,641</u></u>

Designated funds are accumulated surpluses from prior years available for use by the School that generated the funds. In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the Charitable Company has transferred £4 million of general funds to designated funds to be used in support of those families at our independent schools who find themselves unable to pay school fees as a result of the pandemic.

The Sponsorship fund has been formed to gather together the external donations received towards the Charitable Company's support for the academies of United Learning Trust.

Other donated funds include a number of individual donations towards specific building and other projects within the Group.

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**17. Statement of funds (continued)**

**Statement of funds - prior year**

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2018 £000</i>	<i>Income £000</i>	<i>Expenditure £000</i>	<i>Gains/ (losses) £000</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2019 £000</i>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Designated funds	262	130	-	-	392
<b>General funds</b>					
General Funds - all funds	19,448	116,208	(114,105)	-	21,551
Pension reserve	(1,402)	-	(2)	(947)	(2,351)
	<u>18,046</u>	<u>116,208</u>	<u>(114,107)</u>	<u>(947)</u>	<u>19,200</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>18,308</u>	<u>116,338</u>	<u>(114,107)</u>	<u>(947)</u>	<u>19,592</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Sponsorship fund	1,729	-	-	-	1,729
Other donated funds	498	33	-	-	531
	<u>2,227</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,260</u>
<b>Total of funds</b>	<u><u>20,535</u></u>	<u><u>116,371</u></u>	<u><u>(114,107)</u></u>	<u><u>(947)</u></u>	<u><u>21,852</u></u>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**18. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current period**

	<b>Restricted funds 2020 £000</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds 2020 £000</b>	<b>Total funds 2020 £000</b>
Tangible fixed assets	-	5,558	<b>5,558</b>
Intangible fixed assets	-	2,230	<b>2,230</b>
Fixed asset investments	-	217	<b>217</b>
Current assets	2,449	64,233	<b>66,682</b>
Creditors due within one year	-	(53,406)	<b>(53,406)</b>
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(2,640)	<b>(2,640)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,449</b>	<b>16,192</b>	<b>18,641</b>

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior period**

	<i>Restricted funds 2019 £000</i>	<i>Unrestricted funds 2019 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2019 £000</i>
Tangible fixed assets	-	5,858	5,858
Intangible fixed assets	-	1,919	1,919
Fixed asset investments	-	36	36
Current assets	2,260	70,656	72,916
Creditors due within one year	-	(56,526)	(56,526)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(2,351)	(2,351)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,260</b>	<b>19,592</b>	<b>21,852</b>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**19. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities**

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Net income/expenditure for the period (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	<b>(2,933)</b>	<i>2,264</i>
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation and amortisation charges	<b>1,583</b>	<i>1,869</i>
Interest paid	<b>569</b>	<i>598</i>
Decrease in stocks	<b>1</b>	<i>11</i>
Increase in debtors	<b>(1,366)</b>	<i>(4,135)</i>
Decrease in creditors	<b>(5,668)</b>	<i>(867)</i>
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	<b>-</b>	<i>526</i>
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	<b>(15)</b>	<i>(15)</i>
Net liabilities acquired from other charities	<b>4,390</b>	<i>666</i>
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>(3,439)</b>	<i>917</i>

**20. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents**

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Cash in hand	<b>8,254</b>	<i>16,182</i>

**21. Analysis of changes in net debt**

	<b>At 1 September 2019</b>	<b>Cash flows £000</b>	<b>At 31 August 2020</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	<b>16,182</b>	<b>(7,928)</b>	<b>8,254</b>

**22. Contingent liabilities**

At 31 August 2020, the Charitable Company was party to cross-guarantees on bank loans and overdrafts of the parent undertaking totalling £26,817k (2019: £24,923k).

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**23. Capital commitments**

There were no capital commitments at 31 August 2020 or 31 August 2019.

**24. Pension commitments**

The Charitable Company operates defined contribution schemes for the benefit of its employees. The assets of the schemes are managed and held externally on behalf of the scheme members in funds independent from those of the Charitable Company. Employer contributions payable to the schemes during the year amounted to £1.266m (2019: £1.144m). Employee and employer contributions payable to the schemes at the Balance Sheet date amounted to £168k (2019: £142k) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company operates two defined benefit pension scheme: the Teachers' Pension Scheme for England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff, and the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff of one school, which is managed by the Local Authority.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2016 and of the LGPS 31 March 2019.

Contributions amounting to £997k were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2020 (2019 - £774k) and are included within creditors.

The Charitable Company also has an unfunded defined benefit pension scheme which is provided for in the financial statements.

Provisions for unfunded pensions included within the total defined benefit pension scheme liability amounted to £860k (2019: £895k). The current service cost amounted to £Nil (2019: £Nil) and actuarial losses recognised through other comprehensive income amounted to £73k (2019: £14k). Benefits paid during the year amounted to £107k (2019: £104k).

The current mortality assumptions in respect of unfunded pensions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on the retirement age of 65 are between 19-21 years. The discount rate applied in calculating the obligation is 1.70%, with future pension increase and inflation being 0.5%.

**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. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment.

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

**Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme**

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

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST****(A company limited by guarantee)****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020****24. Pension commitments (continued)**

March 2019. The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

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

The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2023.

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £8.937m (2019 - £5.813m).

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 Charitable Company has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Charitable Company has set out above the information available on the scheme.

**Local Government Pension Scheme**

The Charitable Company is one of several employing bodies included within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee administered funds. Contributions to the scheme are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of triennial valuations using the projected unit method.

The total employer's contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2020 was £76k (2019: £72k). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 13.6 - 19.4 per cent for employers and 6.3 - 7.3 per cent for employees.

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Balance sheet date (expressed as weighted averages):

	<b>At 31 August 2020</b>	<i>At 31 August 2019</i>
	%	%
Discount rate	<b>1.70</b>	1.80
Future salary increases	<b>3.90</b>	3.60
Future pension increases	<b>2.50</b>	2.20
Inflation assumption	<b>2.40</b>	2.10

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**24. Pension commitments (continued)**

	<b>2020</b>	2019
Mortality rates (in years)		
- for a male aged 65 now	<b>22.3</b>	22.8
- at 65 for a male aged 45 now	<b>23.8</b>	25.1
- for a female aged 65 now	<b>25.0</b>	25.5
- at 65 for a female aged 45 now	<b>26.8</b>	28.2

The assets in the LGPS were:

	<b>2020</b>	2019
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Equities	<b>3,479</b>	3,714
Bonds	<b>526</b>	125
Property	<b>1,038</b>	684
Cash	<b>137</b>	140
Other	<b>2,449</b>	3,109
<b>Total market value of LGPS assets</b>	<b>7,629</b>	7,772

The actual return on scheme assets was £(45k) (2019: £896k).

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities are as follows (for both the LGPS and unfunded pension scheme):

	<b>2020</b>	2019
	<b>£000</b>	£000
Current service cost	<b>(144)</b>	(104)
Past service cost	<b>(27)</b>	(66)
Interest income	<b>(165)</b>	(211)
Interest cost	<b>139</b>	194
Administrative expenses	<b>(2)</b>	(2)
<b>Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities</b>	<b>(199)</b>	(189)

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**24. Pension commitments (continued)**

Movements in the present value of the LGPS and unfunded defined benefit obligation were as follows:

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening defined benefit obligation	<b>10,123</b>	<i>3,092</i>
Current service cost	<b>144</b>	<i>104</i>
Interest cost	<b>165</b>	<i>211</i>
Contributions by scheme participants	<b>25</b>	<i>24</i>
Actuarial losses	<b>94</b>	<i>1,411</i>
Past service cost	<b>27</b>	<i>66</i>
Share of defined benefit obligation not previously recognised	<b>-</b>	<i>5,525</i>
Benefits paid - LGPS	<b>(202)</b>	<i>(206)</i>
Benefits paid - unfunded obligation	<b>(107)</b>	<i>(104)</i>
<b>Closing defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>10,269</b>	<i>10,123</i>

Changes in the fair value of LGPS scheme assets were as follows:

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
Opening fair value of scheme assets	<b>7,772</b>	<i>1,690</i>
Interest on assets	<b>139</b>	<i>194</i>
Actual return less interest	<b>(184)</b>	<i>702</i>
Contributions by employer	<b>81</b>	<i>83</i>
Contributions by scheme participants	<b>25</b>	<i>24</i>
Share of scheme assets not previously recognised	<b>-</b>	<i>5,287</i>
Benefits paid	<b>(202)</b>	<i>(206)</i>
Administration expenses	<b>(2)</b>	<i>(2)</i>
<b>Closing fair value of scheme assets</b>	<b>7,629</b>	<i>7,772</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**24. Pension commitments (continued)**

The Charitable Company expects to contribute £81k to the LGPS in 2021.

During the prior year, the Charitable Company recognised a net LGPS obligation that existed in previous years and as at 1 September 2018, amounted to £238k. The analysis of this amount between scheme assets and scheme obligations is shown on separate lines in the tables above in the comparative period.

Amounts for the current and previous period are as follows:

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Defined benefit pension schemes</b>		
Defined benefit obligations (including unfunded pension deficit)	<b>(10,269)</b>	<i>(10,123)</i>
LGPS assets	<b>7,629</b>	<i>7,772</i>
<b>Net deficit</b>	<b>(2,640)</b>	<i>(2,351)</i>
Experience adjustments on LGPS and unfunded liabilities	<b>(94)</b>	<i>(1,411)</i>
Experience adjustments on LGPS assets	<b>(184)</b>	<i>702</i>
	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
LGPS net deficit	<b>1,780</b>	<i>1,456</i>
Unfunded pension scheme liability	<b>860</b>	<i>895</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,640</b>	<i>2,351</i>

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

**25. Operating lease commitments**

At 31 August 2020 the Company had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: Land and buildings</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>227</b>	<i>291</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>372</b>	<i>526</i>
After more than 5 years	<b>286</b>	<i>360</i>
	<b>885</b>	<i>1,177</i>
	<b>885</b>	<i>1,177</i>
	<b>2020</b>	<i>2019</i>
	<b>£000</b>	<i>£000</i>
<b>Amounts payable: other</b>		
Within 1 year	<b>1,082</b>	<i>1,155</i>
Between 1 and 5 years	<b>1,077</b>	<i>1,102</i>
	<b>2,159</b>	<i>2,257</i>
	<b>2,159</b>	<i>2,257</i>

**26. Related party transactions**

United Church Schools Foundation Limited is the sole member of United Church School Trust (UCST).

During the year, United Church Schools Foundation Limited charged interest totalling £543k (2019: £579k) and rent totalling £2,653k (2019: £2,632k) to the Charitable Company.

UCST is the sole member of United Learning Trust (ULT).

The Charitable Company provided central services to ULT. The total amount charged during the year totalled £11,399k (2019: £9,561k) and was computed so as to equal the actual costs incurred on a per pupil basis.

At the year end date, balances amounting to £23,051k (2019: £21,253k) were due to the Charitable Company, and balances amounting to £6k (2019: £9k) were due from the Charitable Company to other entities in the Charitable Group of which United Church Schools Foundation Limited is the ultimate parent. These balances arise as a result of direct recharges of costs where resources are centrally procured, with the underlying transactions not therefore representing related party transactions.

There have been no other transactions with related parties that require disclosure under either FRS 102 or Charities SORP (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

---

**UNITED CHURCH SCHOOLS TRUST**

**(A company limited by guarantee)**

---

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020**

---

**27. Post balance sheet events**

Bank loans of the parent undertaking to which the Charitable Company is party to cross-guarantees, which were due to mature in March 2021, have been extended to 31 March 2022.

**28. Ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party**

The Board consider that the ultimate and immediate parent undertaking of the Charitable Company is United Church Schools Foundation Limited (Company number: 00018582) by virtue of the fact that it is the sole member and therefore has the ability to appoint or remove trustees. The principal objects of United Church Schools Foundation Limited are the same as those of the Charitable Company.

In the opinion of the Directors, there is no ultimate controlling party.

The largest group of undertakings for which group accounts have been drawn up is that headed by United Church Schools Foundation Limited. Copies of the group accounts can be obtained from Worldwide House, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, PE3 6SB.