

Southfield School Friends Association
(Friends of Southfield School – FOSS)
Registered Charity 1062790
Annual report 2023-24

c/o Southfield School
Woods Avenue
Hatfield AL10 8NN

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Trustees Report

The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their report for the year ended 31 August 2024.

About the Friends

FOSS – the Friends of Southfield School (legally the Southfield School Friends Association) is the Parent Teacher Association for Southfield School in Hatfield and is a registered charity.

Southfield is a primary school for approximately 87 pupils (100 from September 2024) with learning difficulties including autism, speech language and communication needs and global developmental delay.

FOSS was, after a period of inactivity during the Covid-19 pandemic, rebooted in 2022-2023, and this is the second year of the revitalised Friends.

Charitable Purpose

The object of the Friends is to advance the education of pupils at Southfield School. It does this by:

- developing effective relationships between the staff, parents and others associated with the school; and
- engaging in activities or providing facilities which support the school and advance the education of the pupils attending it.

Activities during the year

FOSS has undertaken a wide range of fundraising during the year.

The most significant financial contributions have been from raising grants from grant-giving charities, including Eastern Counties Educational Trust, the Clothworkers Foundation and the Toy Trust (for a major playground project), smaller amounts earmarked for specific purposes (e.g. Warburtons Foundation for maths resources and Wellfield Trust for uniform) and Bentley Advancing Life Chances, which we agreed with them could be spent in 2024-2025 on the Christmas panto and a birds of prey experience.

The Trustees were also grateful to the Chair of Governors of the school and his fellow County Councillors for allocating part of their locality budget to FOSS to fund scooters, helmets and related expenditure. This funding went with amounts allocated by Tesco's Stronger Starts fund, and the Trustees also secured funding from the Co-Op Local Community Fund – the Trustees also thank those parents, staff, friends and families who chose Southfield when shopping in these two stores or via EasyFundraising and Give As You Live (which raises funds at no cost to parents when they shop online or shop around for cheaper insurance or energy prices), as well as a number of parents, friends and family who gave direct cash donations to FOSS – whether as lump sums or through the 'Smarties Challenge'.

Two raffles were held, raising a significant amount each; the Trustees were also grateful to local businesses who donated prizes, those who bought tickets, and to the parents who sought out donations.

Finally, the committee organised a number of fun events for children – each of these made a small profit, although their aim was also to give the children of Southfield access to opportunities they would

not otherwise get – for example, by exclusive use of a soft play or film showing, allowing children with SEN to attend when attending normal public events might be overwhelming for them. These events also allowed parents to share time with each other socially, which can also be hard, developing a community for parents alongside the sessions run by the school during school hours.

The FOSS committee also played a role as an informal sounding board for the Head and SLT for discussing other school issues with the parent body, contributing towards the other objects of the charity.

Charitable expenditure

The major expenditure by the Friends in the year related to donations to the school to fund a new playground:

- The first phase was completed during the February half term and paid for in the year.
- The second phase was completed over the summer holidays. FOSS donated 50% of the funds to pay the deposit before the summer holidays (i.e. during the period covered by this report and accounts) with the remaining 50% paid in September 2024 on completion of the works.

The remaining £4,450 of donations to school funded a wide range of enrichment opportunities for the children's education, including visiting musical groups, a contribution towards a canal boat trip, sports day, and an investment in scooters and helmets with associated training for staff.

In addition, FOSS spent directly on books for the children.

Financial position

The financial statements are prepared on a cash basis (i.e., without accruing for spending commitments or income pledged but not yet received). The cycle of giving is such that we raise funds first, and then donate these to the school.

At the end of the year, the Charity held £30,249.32. Over half of this amount (£19,117.10) was restricted funds – money donated to FOSS but not yet spent where the conditions of funding meant that the amount could only be spent as specified by the donor. This included £16,561.00 relating to the remaining 50% of the second phase of the playground project.

Unrestricted funds at the end of the year were £11,132.22. Whilst, in theory, these amounts are raised by fundraising events, donations and grants with no conditions attached, in practice amounts have been earmarked by the Trustees as they have been committed to the school to fund specific projects. At the year end, for example, this included £3,200 which the Trustees had promised to school to fund a sail shade alongside the playground project which was installed over the summer but for which payment was not due until after the year end.

The level of unrestricted funds is managed carefully by the Trustees. The trustees' reserves policy is to manage funds so that we can:

- afford to fund known future requests (typically those which we expect on an annual basis);
- earmark funds for planned major projects. Typically a project will involve raising funds from more than one source, with the purchase or start of work needing to wait until it is known that enough money will be available to fund in full – see 'Future plans' below; and
- have sufficient funds to fund expenditure in advance for future events (e.g. to pay the deposit for a venue before ticket income is received).

The general cycle of raising funds to be donated to the school within twelve months means that the charity does not currently have an investment portfolio and therefore has no investment policy. The Trustees keep this under review; if significant funds will be held for a longer period, they will explore a deposit account or other form of safe, low risk investment.

Future plans

The Trustees and the FOSS committee, together with the school's Headteacher and other members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), are looking to fund future projects including replacement of older playground equipment, discretionary IT improvements not covered by the local education authority that will improve the children's learning experience, and an on-site forest school. The priority for each of these is to support the children's specific learning needs for a special school. The Trustees are actively seeking further grant funding, working in partnership with the SLT and governors.

Governance

FOSS is an unincorporated association, registered as a charity (1062790) with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The Trustees who served during the year were:

- Sarah Lettis (School Director of Operations)
- Sarah Gillin (Parent and Treasurer)
- Jennifer Mould (Parent and Secretary)
- Angela O'Rourke (Headteacher - resigned as Trustee: 29 April 2024)

A wider committee of parent volunteers runs FOSS including organising fundraising activities under the legal oversight of the Trustees. During the year this was chaired by Natalie Kyriacou. Since Natalie's child left the school, Emily Berry took over from September 2024. The Trustees would like to record their thanks to Natalie for her hard work and commitment over the last two years.

Public benefit

In carrying out their activities, the Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Safeguarding

The Trustees have adopted the School's safeguarding policy in full, save that (as a matter of law), concerns must be reported to the Trustees rather than to the School. In practice, as Sarah Lettis (a member of the school's SLT) is the Trustee nominated to deal with any concerns, this makes no substantive difference. The Trustees received no concerns in respect of safeguarding during the year.

Approved by the Trustees



Sarah Gillin
Treasurer and Trustee
22nd January 2025

Receipts and payments for the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024

	Receipts £	Payments £	Total £
Parent fundraising events			
Miscellaneous	4,948.41	-1724.27	3,224.14
	4,948.41	-1724.27	3,224.14
Charitable income			
Easyfundraising and Give As You Live	302.13	-	302.13
Parent Donations	806.77		806.77
Grants	86,518.35		86,518.35
	87,627.25	-	87,627.25
Charitable giving			
Donations to school		-68,410.97	-68,410.97
Other charitable expenditure		-834.31	-834.31
		-69,245.28	-69,245.28
Governance expenses			
Parentkind membership including insurance premium			
Small Lotteries Licence renewal			
Grants4schools subscription		- 204.60	-204.60
		-204.60	- 204.60
Total	92,575.66	-71,174.15	21,401.51

Balance sheet and movement on reserves

Opening balances as at 1 September 2023

	£	£
Bank	8,797.81	
Cash in hand	50.00	
		<u>8,847.81</u>

Receipts		92,575.66
Payments		-71,174.15

Closing balance as at 31 August 2024

Bank	30,226.52	
Cash in hand	22.80	
		<u><u>30,249.32</u></u>

Of which:		£
Restricted reserves: Playground (committed to pay September 2024)		16,561.00
Restricted reserves: Balance of locality & Bentley grant		2,556.10
Unrestricted reserves		<u>11,132.22</u>
Total		<u><u>30,249.32</u></u>

Approved by the Trustees



Sarah Gillin
Treasurer and Trustee
22nd January 2025

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Southfield School Friends Association (registered charity 1062790) on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 August 2024.

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Rachael Lyon

Date: 22nd January 2025

Chartered Accountant

48 Tennyson Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL2 3HY