

Registered number: 04669567
Charity number: 1106112

The Quest School
(A company limited by guarantee)

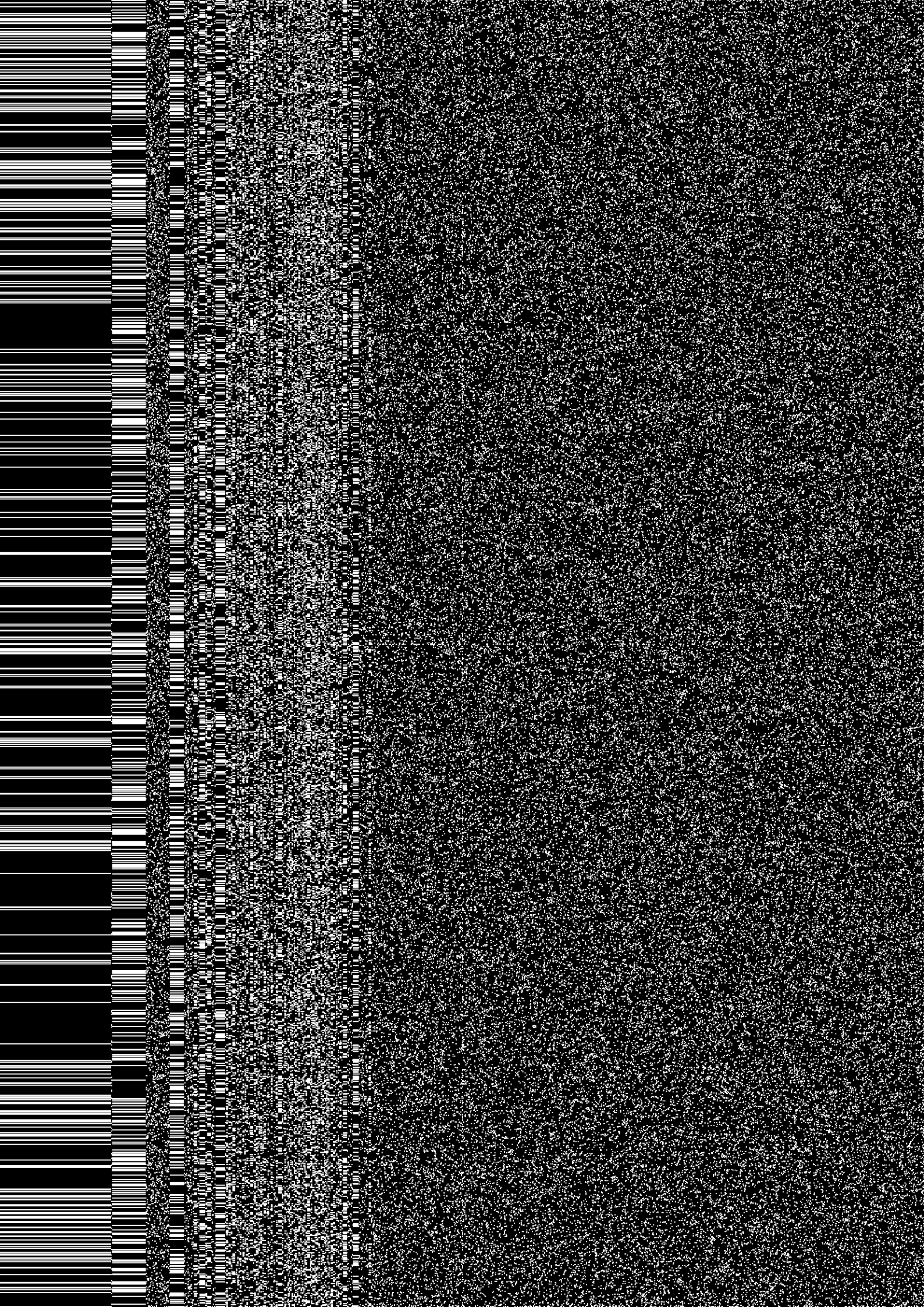
Trustees' report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 July 2023

The Quest School
(A company limited by guarantee)

Reference and administrative details of the Charity, its Trustees and advisers
For the year ended 31 July 2023

Trustees	I S J Martin, Chair L M Edmans, CBE D J Bruce P Whiteley P C Mepsted P Barnett C M Wratten (resigned 1 July 2023) K E Wratten (resigned 1 March 2023) M K Plange
Company registered number	04669567
Charity registered number	1106112
Registered office	The Hop Farm Maidstone Road Paddock Wood Kent TN12 6PY
Company secretary	A Carter-Mepsted
Independent auditors	Kreston Reeves LLP Statutory Auditor Montague Place Quayside Chatham Maritime Chatham Kent ME4 4QU
Bankers	HSBC Bank plc 1-5 Week Street Maidstone Kent ME14 1QW



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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 July 2023

Achievements and performance

a. Main achievements of the Charity

The Quest School started in 2003 with 3 pupils and has grown steadily since then. At the end of July 2023, the school had a total of 23 pupils.

The school provides a specialist learning environment, designed around the specific needs of pupils with autism, and uses a structured teaching approach built on the principles of behaviour science.

The school has a proven track record of achieving excellent outcomes for its pupils, most of whom face very significant challenges due to the severity of their autism and learning disabilities.

The school has robust processes for measuring pupil progress, including referencing against national standards for academic progress for pupils with Special Educational needs. The data shows that pupils at Quest consistently make excellent progress, when compared with pupils of similar learning profiles.

The school places great importance on developing functional skills for pupils, in order to promote independence and improve their quality of life. Pupils' individual learning programmes include development of skills in the following areas:

- Academic learning;
- Language & Communication;
- Social and Community Functional skills;
- Independence skills

b. Key performance indicators

Ofsted Inspection November 2022

The most recent full Ofsted inspection in November 2022 judged the school to be Outstanding in every category, validating the accuracy and robustness of whole school self-evaluation processes, and whole school philosophy and endeavour of excellence and continuous improvement.

We were extremely proud of achieving this Outstanding rating from Ofsted; this was the third consecutive inspection in which we achieved the highest rating and means we have been graded as Outstanding since 2012.

History of Ofsted inspection ratings:

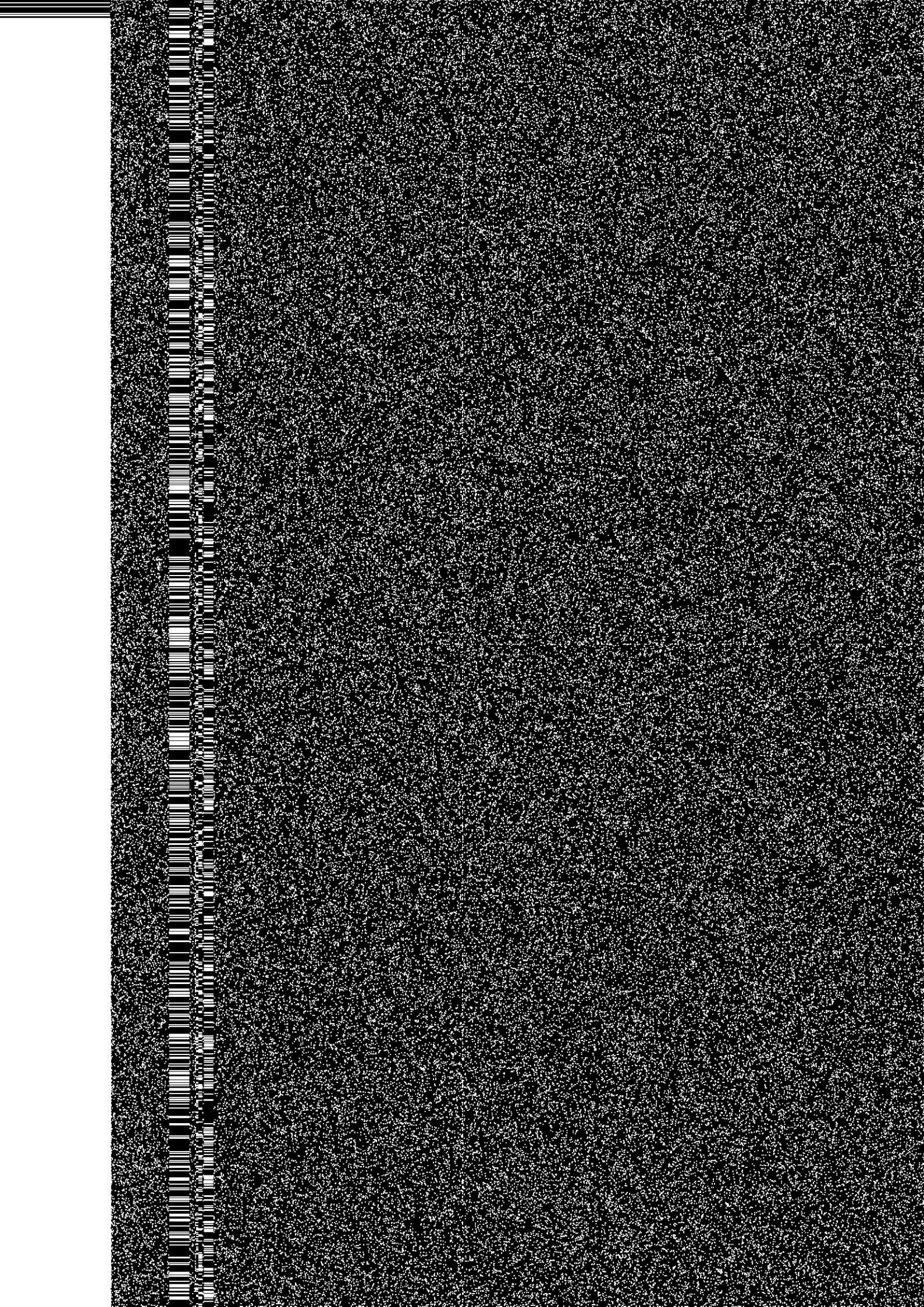
- November 2022: Outstanding in all categories
- March 2018: Outstanding in all categories
- June 2012 Outstanding in all categories

Quotes from the Ofsted inspection report:

"The Quest School is a very special school, and pupils are rightly very proud of it. The education that pupils receive is exceptional. The school motto, 'achievements never thought possible,' sums up life here."

"Staff place the safety and care of pupils at the heart of everything they do."

"Pupils are very well prepared for adulthood, and all move on to suitable education, training or specialist settings."



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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 July 2023

Achievements and performance (continued)

Staffing

The school continues to employ high calibre staff as well as working with external consultants, Speech & Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists, in order to enhance the learning of all pupils. Staff receive training in ABA, as well as relevant statutory training including Safeguarding, First Aid and Fire Safety Awareness. The school has continued with its planned leadership succession planning, with a Deputy Head teacher and Asst Head teacher appointed at the end of the 2022-23 year.

During 2022-23, in line with many others in the Special Needs Education sector (and many other sectors in the economy), the school experienced a continued challenge in the recruitment and retention of staff. There were periods of time during the year in which there were staffing shortages on a day to day basis.

The Board of Management implemented a number of measures to help address the staffing issues, including:

- Revised staffing model and review of salaries,
- Staff appreciation and retention scheme
- Loyalty bonus schemes for new staff (see 'section e Staff Pay Matters' below)
- Introduction of an overall staff Well being strategy, including a Well being taskforce.

c. Review of activities

Pupil Progress:

Pupil progress data for 2022-23 shows that pupils continued to make excellent progress. Below are some examples of individual progress.

Examples of pupil progress:

Pupil A: At the start of 2022-23, Pupil A had no functional means of communication (ie was effectively non-verbal). Pupil A also showed behaviour such as absconding from the classroom, refusing to sit at a table, or pay attention to any teacher requests. Pupil A would also frequently cry when asked to do anything. By the end of the year, Pupil A was able to use some signs to communicate, with vocal approximations. Pupil A was also consistently responding to teacher's instructions and engaging in work and play activities. Pupil A is now generally happy, and engaged throughout the school day.

Pupil B: Towards the beginning of the school year, 2022-23 Pupil B demonstrated high levels of challenging behaviour, which included biting, headbanging and grabbing. Pupil B was also refuse to follow staff instructions.

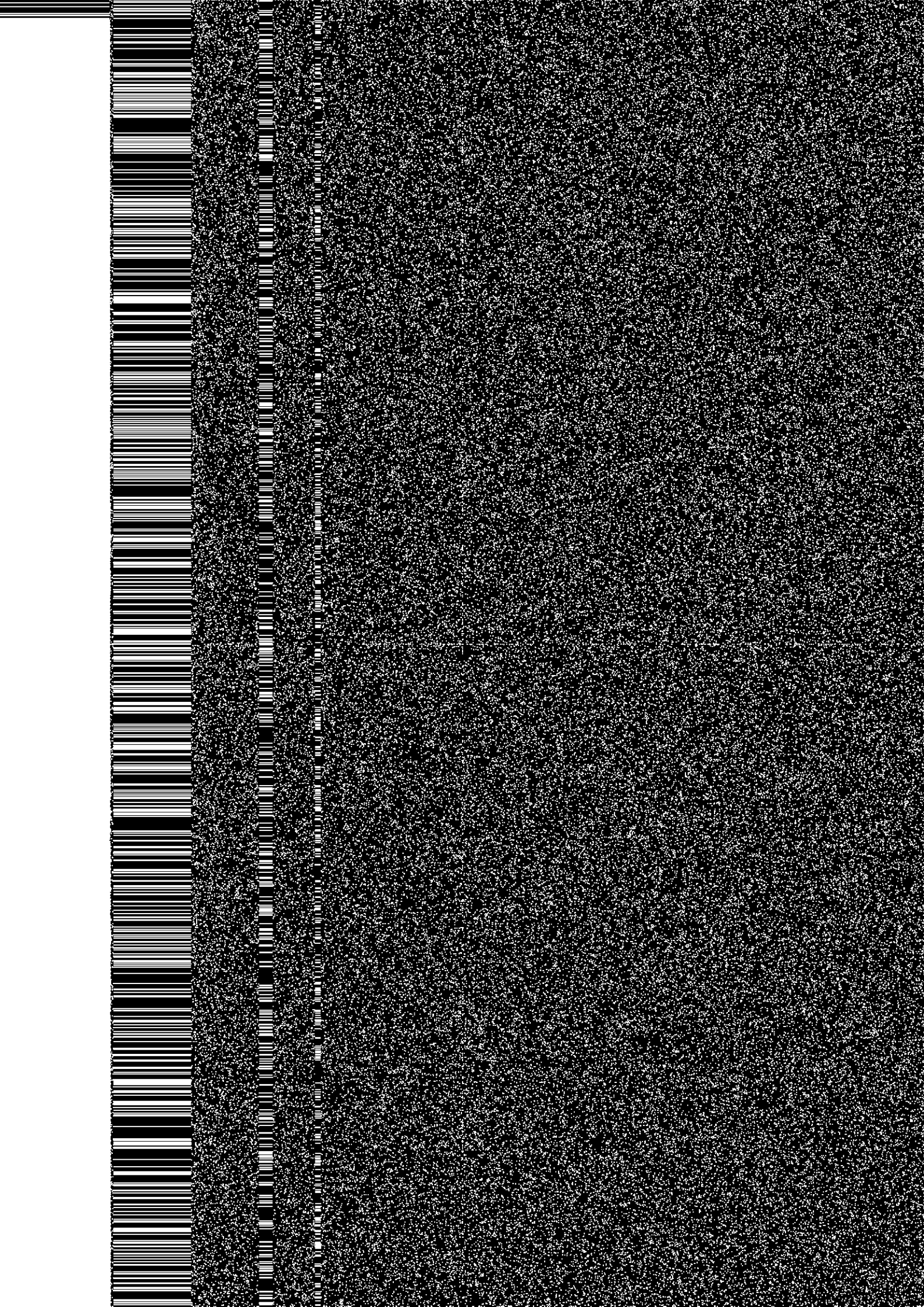
An individualised behaviour support programme was implemented for Pupil B over a number of months and overseen by the school's behaviour analysts. This intervention proved successful. By the end of the year, Pupil B Presented as happy and calm when at school and was progressing well throughout a range of learning programmes

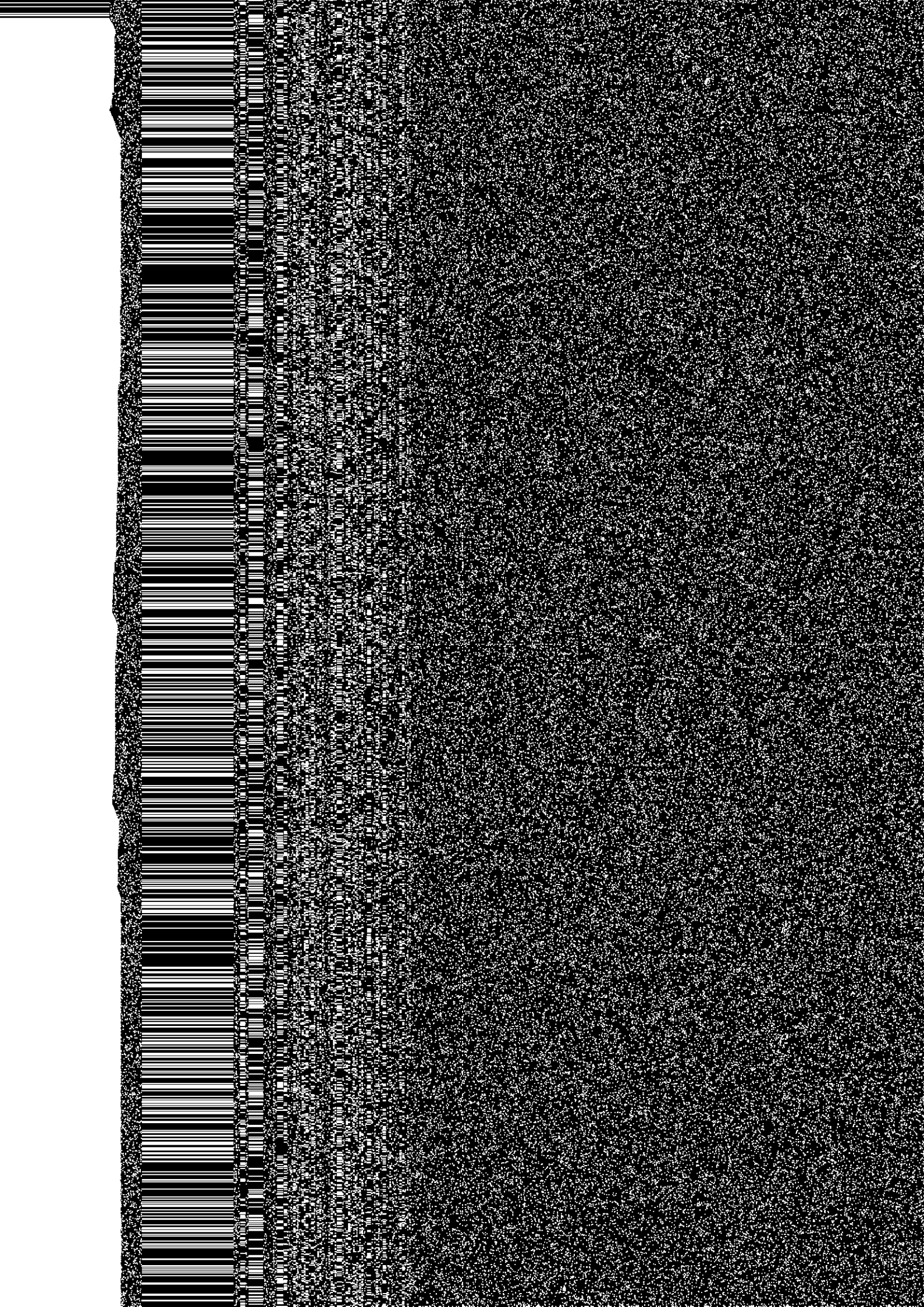
Curriculum development: the school works hard to continually improve and develop the provision for its pupils; hence there is an ongoing programme of curriculum development.

During 2022-23, we reviewed our curriculum for Mathematics; this led to the introduction of an enhanced school-wide curriculum, and also included additional training for staff in teaching Maths skills. Additional training for staff was also provided to enhance skills in understanding and supporting pupils' mental health.

We also extended our Speech and Language provision with the introduction of more Communication skills; in addition to the following: Sulp (Social Use of Language Programme) and Lego therapy, we also now run small groups in Attention Autism.

During 2022-23, Quest school became an accredited ACE (Authorised Continuing Education) provider. This accreditation enables us to provide training events which are accredited by the Behaviour Analysts Certification Board.





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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 July 2023

Structure, governance and management (continued)

c. Organisational structure and decision-making policies

Policy adherence and review:

The school maintains a regular cycle, monitored by the Board of Management, of reviewing all policies to ensure they remain current. Staff regularly sign a policy adherence confirmation to acknowledge that they comply with all school policies. Where any staff member had not complied with a particular aspect of policy, a log is made and appropriate action, such as additional coaching for staff, is implemented.

d. Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees

Induction of the new Trustee followed our usual induction process.

e. Staff pay matters

During 2019-20, the School became a recognised 'Living Wage' employer, and has continued this policy, ensuring increases to salary for the lowest paid staff increase in line with the Living Wage.

During 2019-20, the Board also agreed to the introduction of two staff appreciation and retention initiatives: an enhanced pension contribution matching scheme and a non-contractual five year 'retention incentive' payment scheme. During 2020-21 these schemes have continued to evolve, with new staff added. These schemes remain discretionary and are non-contractual.

In September 2021 a further scheme was introduced to reward new staff for their loyalty and dedication to Quest. New starters will receive a payment of £1000 after 2 years' service, to be paid the term following completion of 2 full years' service. An additional £1000 is paid following 2 more additional years' service.

Starters who joined Quest after October 2020 and were not included in the Staff Appreciation and Retention Scheme are eligible for the New Staff Loyalty Bonus, and therefore will receive a £1000 payment after 2 years' service.

The Board believe these schemes have played a significant role in retaining the services of our talented and committed long- serving staff upon whom Quest is dependent for the achievement of high quality pupil outcomes, and enabling such committed and loyal staff to adequately prepare for retirement.

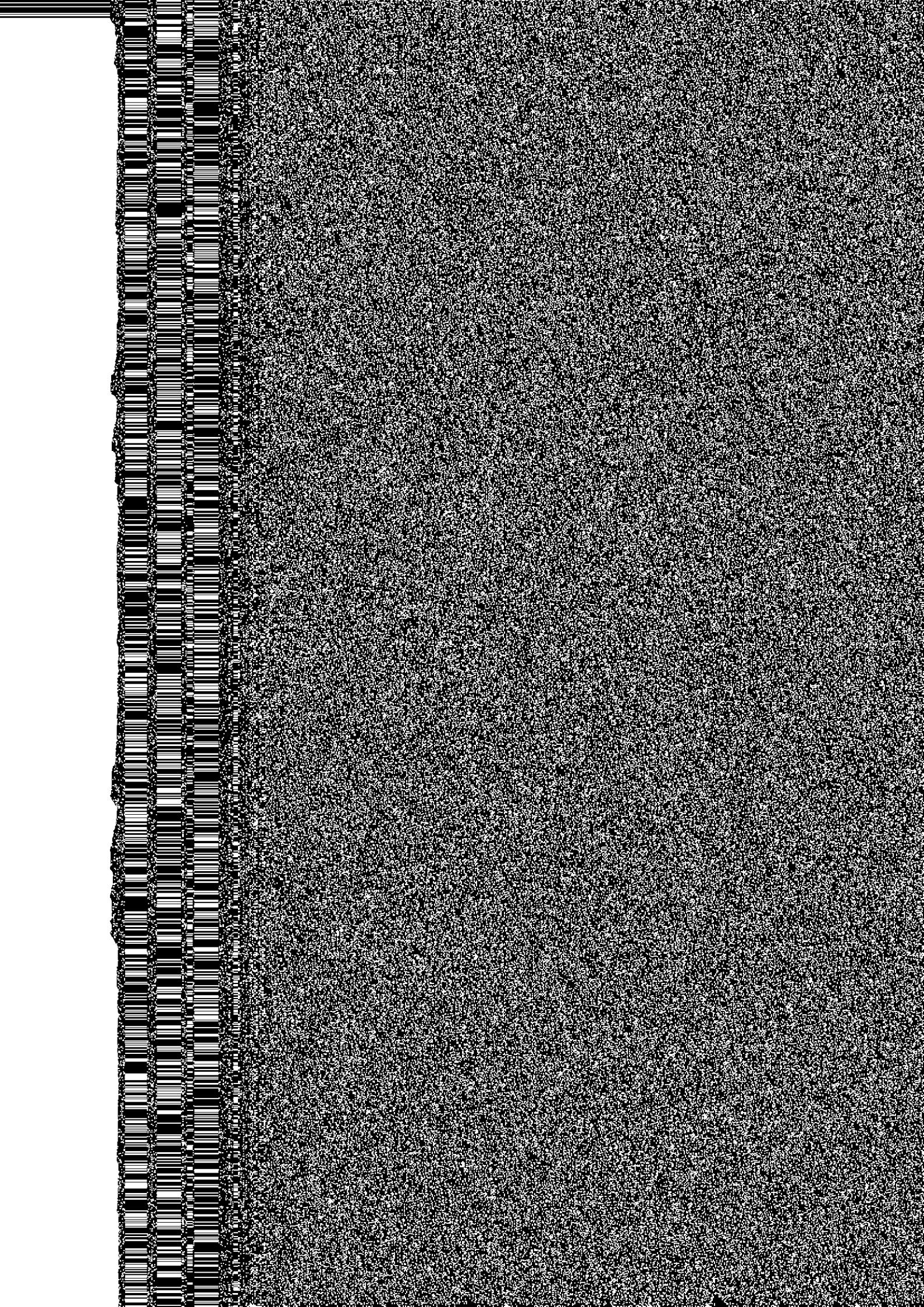
From time to time The Boards benchmark salary rates against available relevant comparators such as the broader educational sector and similar specialist schools.

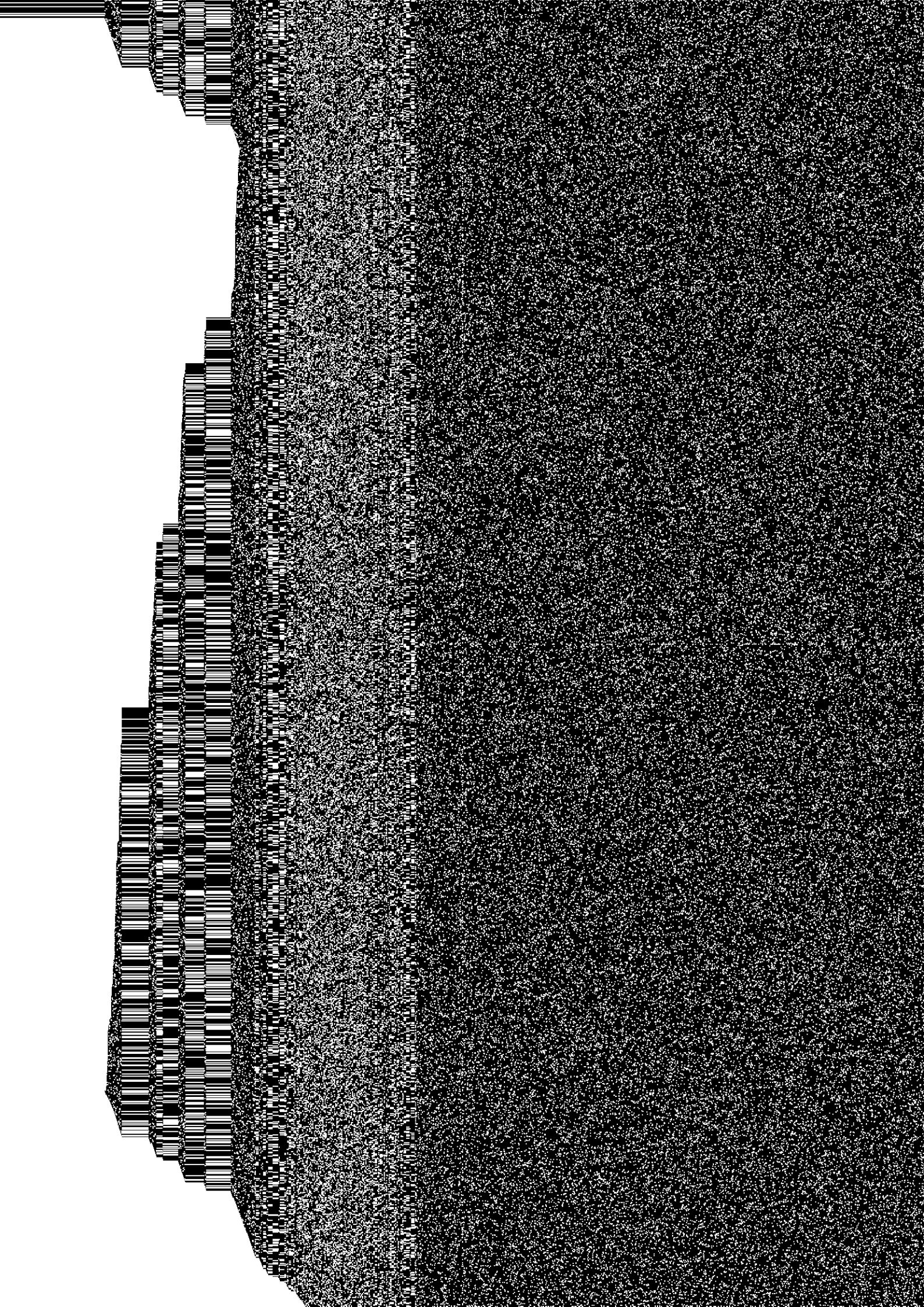
Our bi-annual stakeholder survey was completed in May 2023. The results from all stakeholders are exceptionally positive. They were very good last time (in 2021), and have retained or further improved in most cases.

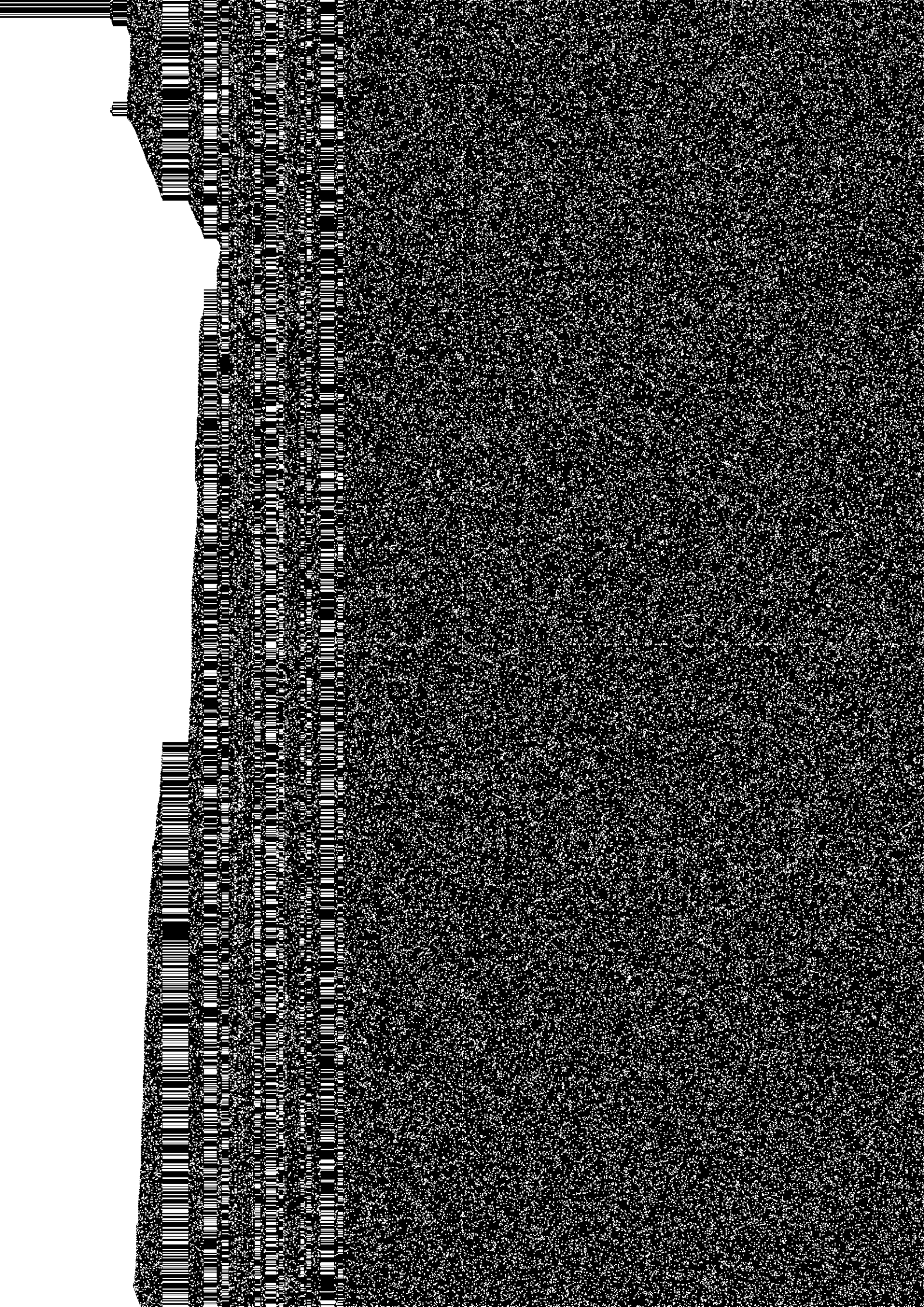
During the past year in particular we have worked very hard on staff well-being and engagement, and these efforts are evident in the feedback from staff. There is also significantly improved annual staff turnover:

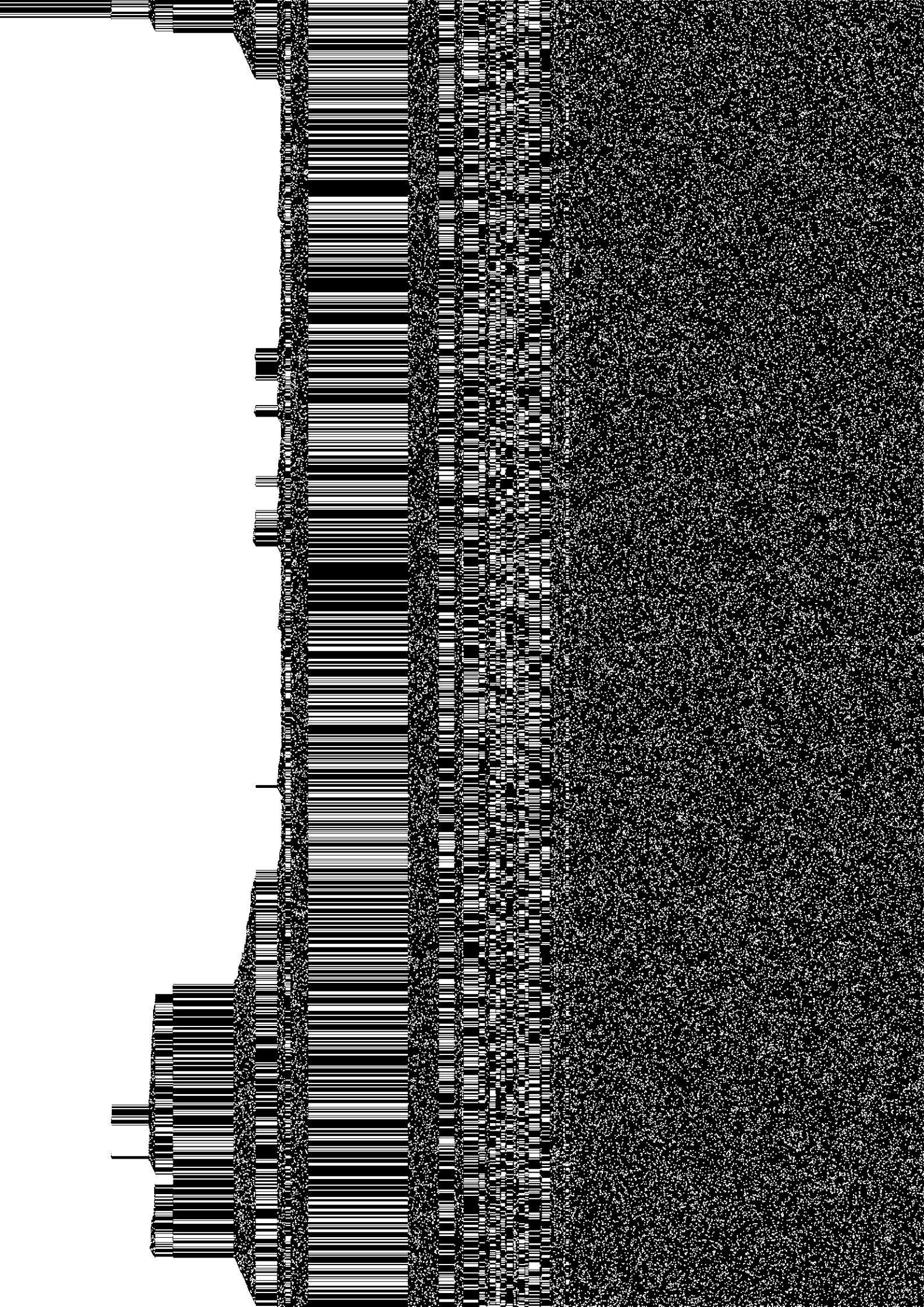
f. Related party relationships

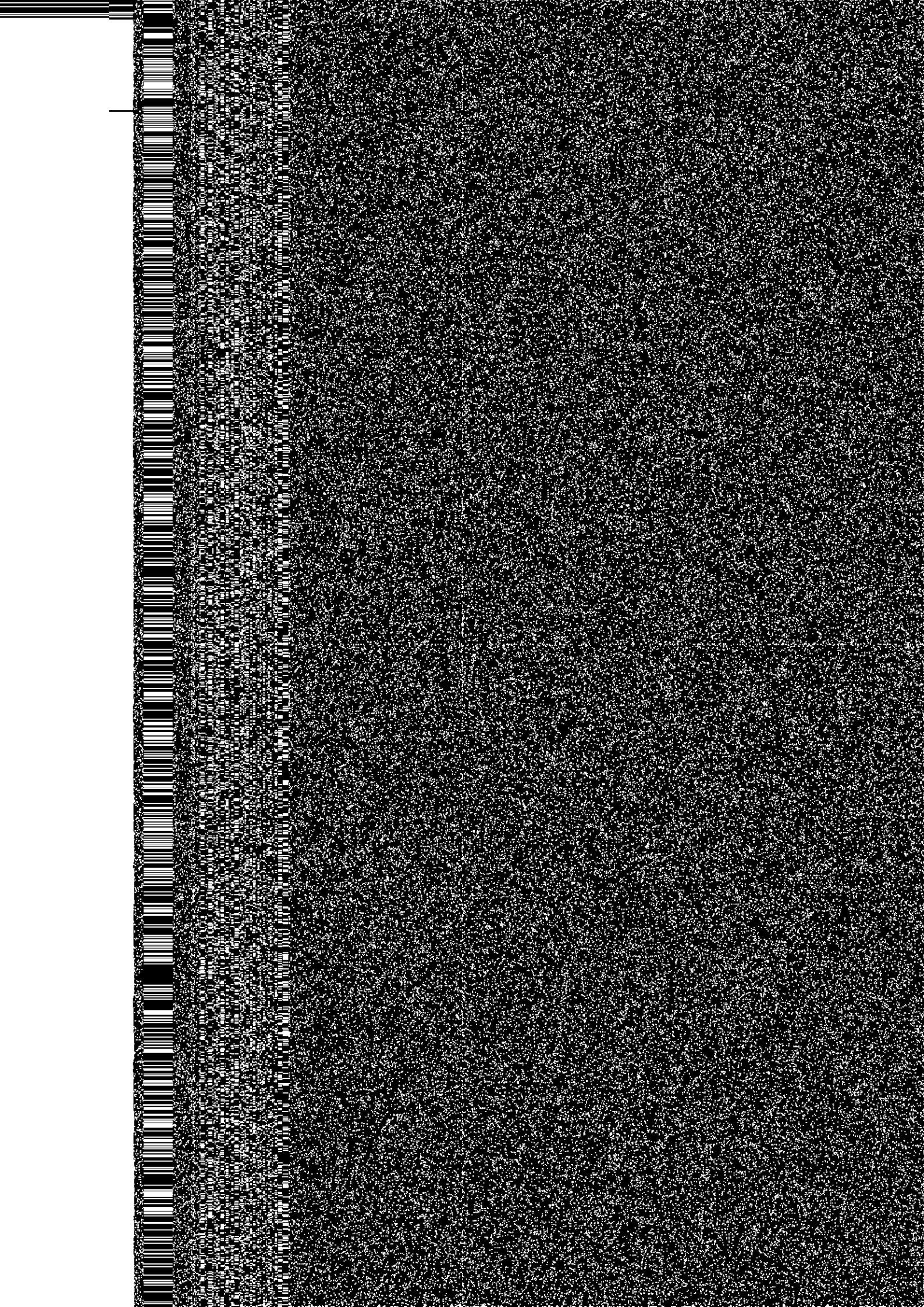
The charity was founded by a number of families who had children with autism, having established that the needs of their children were not being met by any facility in the area. Two of these families are still active in the charity. Ian Martin is the Chair and his wife, Anne Martin, NPQH (National Professional Qualification in Headship) is the Head Teacher. Peter Mepsted is Director/Trustee and his wife, Ashley Carter Mepsted is the Head of Development & Projects. Peter also provides services to the School in relation to his occupation as a Health and Safety Consultant. All decisions relating to remuneration and employment of connected members of staff and consultants are taken by the Board of Trustees in their absence and in the absence of their spouses. Appropriate day to day operational controls and disclosures to Trustees are in place.











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Balance sheet
As at 31 July 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Intangible assets	10	3,208	-
Tangible assets	11	16,396	15,867
		<u>19,604</u>	<u>15,867</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	12	12,750	9,453
Investments	13	1,000,000	700,000
Cash at bank and in hand		263,670	471,989
		<u>1,276,420</u>	<u>1,181,442</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(63,000)	(77,210)
Net current assets		<u>1,213,420</u>	<u>1,104,232</u>
Total net assets		<u>1,233,024</u>	<u>1,120,099</u>
Charity funds			
Restricted funds	15	-	-
Unrestricted funds	15	1,233,024	1,120,099
Total funds		<u>1,233,024</u>	<u>1,120,099</u>

The entity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006.

The members have not required the entity to obtain an audit for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

However, an audit is required in accordance with section 144 of the Charities Act 2011.

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 have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to entities subject to the small companies regime.

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



I S J Martin
(Chair of Trustees)



P C Mepsted
(Trustee)

The notes on pages 19 to 33 form part of these financial statements.

