THE SPARK ARTS FOR CHILDREN

England & Wales · Charity number 1106952

Details

Other names	THE SPARK CHILDREN'S ARTS FESTIVAL
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	05254229
Registered	2004-11-24
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Lcb Depot 31 Rutland Street Leicester LE1 1RE
Phone	01162616893
Email	admin@thesparkarts.co.uk
Website	www.thesparkarts.co.uk

Activities

Objects: TO ADVANCE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE, THE EAST MIDLANDS AND BEYOND THROUGH A RANGE OF ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THE ORGANISATION AND PROMOTION OF AN ANNUAL ARTS FESTIVAL, CONSISTING OF WORKSHOPS AND PRODUCTIONS OF DANCE, THEATRE AND OTHER PERFORMING ARTS; PRESENTED IN THEATRES, COMMUNITY VENUES AND SCHOOLS.

Activities: The Spark gives children opportunities to immerse themselves in the arts by experiencing a wide range of high quality work that inspires, empowers and educates. Through an annual festival, cultural education & community programmes and production of our own work we offer children the space to discover their own skills, passions and potential, as audiences, participants & creators of their own art.

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Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** Education/training, Arts/culture/heritage/science
- **Who:** Children/young People, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE, THE EAST MIDLANDS AND BEYOND.
- Leicester City
- Leicestershire
- Nottinghamshire
- Rutland

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£533,605	£375,958	£325,425	7
2024-03-31	£447,004	£432,173	-	-
2023-03-31	£552,792	£614,287	£152,947	13
2022-03-31	£705,045	£620,803	£214,442	13
2021-03-31	£406,760	£389,459	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Michael Candler	Chair	2014-03-28
Dr Patricia Bennett		2022-07-28
Jasbir Mann		2017-07-10
Mahmood Reza		
Ruth Lee		2022-02-01
Suzanne Laura Guthrie		2020-01-13

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THE SPARK ARTS FOR CHILDREN

England & Wales - Charity number 1106952

Accounts

Company registration number: 05254229

Charity registration number: 1106952

The Spark Arts for Children

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Community Accounting Plus
Units 1 & 2 North West
41 Talbot Street
Nottingham
NG1 5GL

The Spark Arts for Children

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The Spark Arts for Children

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees	R Lee P Bennett J Mann S L M Guthrie M Reza M E Candler
Secretary	Kamini Chhana
Senior Management Team	Trina Haldar, Interim Director
Charity Registration Number	1106952
Company Registration Number	05254229
Registered Office	LCB Depot 31 Rutland Street Leicester Leicestershire LE1 1RE
Independent Examiner	Eva Stevens, employee of Community Accounting Plus Units 1 & 2 North West 41 Talbot Street Nottingham NG1 5GL
Bankers	Metro Bank One Southhampton Row London WC1B 5HA Santander Santander Business Banking operations Sunderland SR43 4FW

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Trustees and officers

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:	R Lee
	P Bennett
	J Mann
	S L M Guthrie
	M Reza
	M E Candler
Secretary:	T Kidder (resigned 1 June 2025)
	Kamini Chhana (appointed 1 June 2025)

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, dated 8 October 2004. It has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to £1.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

To help deliver its public benefit, the charity aims to have an overall balance of skills, aptitude and representation within its Trustees. Regular skills audits are undertaken by the Chair, and recruitment is undertaken where areas are felt to be underrepresented.

An equalities survey is undertaken yearly and any recruitment aims for a balance across gender, ethnicity sexual orientation, disability and lower socio-economic groups.

The charity aims to have one "young" Trustee aged between 18-24.

One third (or the number nearest one third) of the Trustees must retire at each AGM, and may be re-elected.

The trustees have adopted 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) (effective 1 January 2019).

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

Objectives and activities

Objects and aims

The charity's objects per the Articles of Association are as follows:

To advance the education and development of children and young people in Leicester, Leicestershire and beyond through a range of activities, including the organisation and promotion of an annual arts festival, consisting of workshops and productions of dance, theatre and other performing arts; presented in theatres, community venues and schools.

Mission, vision and values

Mission
Working in partnership to empower children to thrive, we explore the difference culture makes through arts engagement, creative interactions and cultural connections, enabling children's voices to be heard, their creativity supported, and their cultural values understood.

Vision
Extraordinary experiences for children, sparking creativity and change.

Values
Our values underpin everything we do:

- A fair and safe environment where everyone is valued
- The space for big ideas to grow
- We are curious and love learning
- Empowering children and young people to be amazing

Since 2004, The Spark has been culturally raising the children of Leicester and Leicestershire. We empower children's creative potential in nurseries, schools, playgrounds and homes, libraries, museums, theatres and art centres. We promote children's cultural values and communities through strong partnerships, creative practices and innovation.

A key strength is how we support artists at different stages in their careers and practices. Conceived in 2018, Vital Spark is a movement that addresses the lack of diversity in live and digital performance for young audiences. We co-create professional development opportunities and co-commission and produce new work, supporting artists who are underrepresented in the creative and cultural industries. In turn, these artists support us in our capacity to be a more inclusive and accessible organisation.

Our ambition is for our work to be as thought-provoking as it is playful, and for our organisation to be as creative as our delivery. Our goal is to adapt and change as children's communities change and to continue to be relevant to all children.

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

Strategic objectives
The following strategic objectives provide continuity during change and the foundations for a structured period of business development from 2025. Our strategic objectives:

• Commission and produce a high quality and diverse cultural programme for children in cultural venues, schools and libraries, enabling children, their families and communities to experience the richness of the arts.

• Deliver a co-created children's arts festival recognised nationally and connected internationally for the representation, ambition and innovation of the programme, and valued for its contribution to the quality of life for children.

• Champion arts-based learning and teaching for creativity, collaborating to ensure children locally access and influence arts and cultural opportunities, no matter where they start in life, as their right to creativity, agency and play.

• Build an entrepreneurial culture on existing work and new ways of working, where diverse organisational and grassroots governance and creativity in strategy creates a step change in practice and moves our work towards sustainability.

Our outcomes
Our values and strategies are strongly aligned with Arts Council England's Investment Principles and Outcomes long term. We deliver Creative People, Cultural Communities and A Creative and Cultural Country outcomes, principally:

• Providing high-quality early years activities that reach families from a wider range of backgrounds;
• Widening and improving opportunities for children and young people to take part in creative activities inside schools;
• Widening and improving opportunities for children and young people to take part in creative activities outside schools;
• Supporting children and young people to develop their creative skills and potential;
• Improving access to a full range of cultural opportunities wherever people live;
• Working with communities to better understand and respond to their needs and interests, resulting in increased cultural engagement and the wide range of social benefits it brings;
• Working collaboratively through place-based partnerships to support and involve communities in high quality culture, improve creative and cultural education for children and young people, improve health and wellbeing through creative and cultural activity, build skills and capacity in the cultural sector and grow its economic impact;
• Supporting new types of creative practice, new forms of cultural content and new ways of reaching new and existing audiences and participants;
• Ensuring people have opportunities to sustain their careers and fulfil their potential in the creative industries, especially those who are currently under-represented.

Significant activities

Organisational restructure

In January 2024, trustees began an independent review of the organisation with the support of Nu Leaf.

Following the departures of Artistic Director Christopher Gorry and the Interim Executive Producer Tom Newton in June 2024, Trina Haldar was appointed in September 2024, as Interim Director, and remains in place to provide stability and leadership to the organisation during a period of significant change.

Following the departure of Community Engagement Officer James Lawrence in 2024, freelance marketing and communications is fixed short-term to provide expertise, place-based knowledge and effective and continuous delivery.

The new organisational structure is being phased in as we finalise the changes to existing roles and recruit into new roles. This work will be completed during Autumn 2025 with vacant posts due to be filled by late 2025.

Our approach to co-creation

Our work is evidence-based and increasingly co-constructed between artists, teachers and children to improve outcomes for children, families, artists and creative practitioners. Co-creating evaluation will be key to our success moving forward. With a change in leadership, we refined our theory of change in 2024 to support embedding our organisation-wide evaluation framework, driven by our Quality and Ambition investment principle and linking activity delivery and impact measurement across our other investment principles: Inclusivity and Relevance, Environmental Responsibility and Dynamism.

The Mega Bosses of Spark - Child Action Group

Children are at the heart of everything we do at The Spark. This includes not only what we do artistically but also how we do it - we want to ensure children's voices are heard, and most importantly action is taken.

Implemented in 2023, the child action group is made up of 8 to 13 year olds from across Leicester, and helps The Spark to understand what kinds of arts and creative activities children want to see and take part in, and what 'amazing' looks like for them. Their Quality and Ambition Manifesto drives our work:

- We believe in equity for all. This means giving everyone the opportunity to join in
- Spark Arts events should be exciting and enjoyable for all
- We stand for everyone around the world to feel welcome and respected
- Be fun, less boring!
- We want Spark Arts to do activities in schools that help children to be confident

Children attend monthly sessions with members of the team and artists. Twice a year the trustees and leadership team feedback to the child action group on the actions they have taken to deliver their manifesto across the organisation and provide an opportunity for a feedback loop of progress, actions and development.

Our headlines for 2024-2025 are presented below, starting with a data snapshot and followed by a handful of highlights to demonstrate how our work is reaching new audiences.

- Employed 50 artists (compared to 34 in 2023/24)
- Programmed 55 performances (compared to 52 in 2023/24)
- Engaging 13,871 in person and 7,200 on social media totalling 21,071 (compared to 17,322 in 2023/24)
- And 7,273 children and families actively participating (compared to 3,762 in 2023/24).

Trustees' Report

Public benefit

In summary, the main activities The Spark Arts for Children delivers throughout the year for public benefit is a range of activities including artistic skills and capacity building, performing arts, visual arts and digital arts presentations, productions and participation workshops and events. Because these activities take place in schools, libraries, theatres, arts centres, museums, outdoors and online, we help to advance children's learning and development, delivering social, economic and cultural education outcomes for children in Leicester, Leicestershire and the East Midlands.

Importantly, we have prioritised child voice, participation, and leadership to support children to feel empowered, to feel their voices are being heard and to see that change is happening because of the decisions they are making and actions they are taking.

We believe that by supporting children, teachers, and artists to build their creative capabilities and by working collaboratively, together we can make social and cultural change sustainable.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Achievements and performance

Experiencing the extraordinary

Spark Festival 2024 and Spark Live

We are warmly known for our annual Festival and this year we launched Spark LIVE, while the main public Festival now happens every other year, we present a little Festival magic through the year, on a non-Festival year, in order to offer more to our community.

This year we hosted a total of 13 Spark LIVE events as part of the At Your Schools programme in partnership with a number of community and cultural venues across the city. These were offered at low cost to schools to ensure all children can experience a rich cultural offer. We worked with theatre companies, musicians and dance companies to present a diverse range of activities that enabled those who wouldn't ordinarily engage in arts and culture to engage in high quality activities.

Building a diverse workforce

Vital Spark Relationship Programme and Ideas Fund

Since 2018, 65 artists have engaged in Vital Spark: in development (e.g. go-sees, masterclasses, networking events); with investment in ideas (e.g. ideas fund, fundraising support, R&D, providing and brokering specialist guidance, mentoring); producing full commissions (partnership development, co-commissioning investment); and Seat at the Table events (Code of Care development and peer to peer learning). This unique programme also supports softer skills development, in recognition that many underrepresented artists are intersectional and function outside of a set system. We encourage, empower and enhance new approaches to creating and how the industry receives their artistry.

In 2024-25, an investment of £20,000 supported: 7 artists, focusing on Early years, telling untold stories - through heritage lens, spoken word, digital animation, projection mapping, dance, and theatre. Over an the engagement period, the artists took part in a residential (including masterclasses and network events, Go & See visits (Manchester, London):3 days, 7 venues visited, 9 performances attended. Created a Artist Takeover Event: Sharing practice with 22+ programmers (including 2 international children's festival programmers). One-to-One Support included: 24 coaching sessions (6 per artist), 16 mentoring sessions, 4 funding support sessions. From the cohort of artists 4 funding bids were submitted: 3 successful, 1 pending.

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

A child's right to play

Leicester experiences significant deprivation. Before Covid-19, some Leicester communities faced inequalities and exclusion - Leicester had the 7th highest poverty rate of 181 urban authorities (Leicester City Council, 2020). It is widely accepted that lockdown had a detrimental effect on the most isolated and vulnerable, particularly children. Our work delivers cultural opportunity and equitable outcomes.

Small Wonders

Small wonders, as part of our early years offer recommenced in October 2024 in partnerships with Leicester Libraries and Early Help through our strong partnership with Leicester City Council. Small Wonders continues to support exceptional creative pedagogy and practice showing growth potential for training and peer-to-peer learning, particularly for artists new to the industry or work in early years and early years practitioners. We will continue to build our partnerships towards sustainable engagement and funding.

Music Champions

The musicians training programme, developing craft applicable to early years settings which will culminate in September 2025. Delivered a transformative sector development project, increasing the skills and expertise of musicians. Working in partnership with Leicester City Council Neighbourhood Services and Early Help and Leicestershire Music Hub.

We've explored and tested the delivery model underpinned by two key principles: Equal partnership between musician and early years practitioner; and Child led music play leading to the most impact on the child. We now have grown an established talented and trained pool of local and regional freelance musicians (Music Champions), who work effectively in early years child development. Future improvements include increasing parental engagement, early years Continuing Professional Development and Learning resources for musicians and advocacy for music and the arts in early years practitioner training.

A child's right to creativity

At Your School Tour

With our ongoing commitment to culturally raise the children of Leicester by providing access to high quality arts and culture, we delivered our At Your School programme to a number of schools in May 2024.

Across 7 days we toured 3 productions to Leicester Primary schools; Belongings - a piece about a looked-after child and what it means to belong; Arun Ghosh and Friends - live indo-jazz gig in schools; and Birdie - three professional actors with learning disabilities, blending intricate choreography, original music, to tell a powerful story about climate change. 3195 audience members experienced the productions across 34 performances.

Building Brave Spaces

Supported by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Building Brave Spaces works together with schools to explore how theatre can harness and amplify children's voices and really place them at the heart of our work with schools. In partnership with Falcons, Medway, Mayflower, Charnwood Primary Schools we have been learning about children's voice, participation and leadership in the PSHE curriculum, and the benefits of creative expression and wellbeing on child development and learning.

Trustees' Report

Funding
The Spark Arts for Children receives National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding from Arts Council England, now confirmed for the period 2023 to 2027.

The Spark continues to receive the majority of its income from Arts Council England, Trusts and Foundations and Local Authorities across the breadth of our work in creative workforce development, libraries, schools and communities, including a core funding contribution from Leicester City Council for our festival work. During the year the charity also received welcome support from corporate partners and individual donors, and these continue to be an important component of income generation.

Financial review
Deferred restricted funds to 2024-25: £5,000 (2023-24 £19,641)
Restricted Funds carried forward: £205,659 (2023-24 £129,001)
Unrestricted Funds carried forward: £119,766 (2023-24 £38,777)
Totals reserves carried forward: £325,425 (2023-24 £167,778)

Policy on reserves

This section explains how and when our reserves can be spent and how much we need to hold in reserves and why.

The purpose of the Reserves Policy is to explain the stability of the mission, employment, programmes and ongoing operations of the organisation and to provide a source of internal funds for organisational priorities such as programme opportunity and capacity and skills building. The Reserves Policy is implemented alongside other governance and financial policies, aligned to make sure policies and strategies are joined up to provide the structure, systems and practices to deliver our strategic goals and operational plans.

Reserves are planned to provide an internal source of funds for situations such as a sudden increase in expenses, one-time unbudgeted expenses, unanticipated loss in funding, or uninsured losses. Reserves are also intended to provide an internal source of funds where the company permanently ceases charitable activities and must close operations. Our reserves are used to demonstrate and build resilience. As such, they serve a dynamic role and are regularly reviewed and adjusted in response to both internal and external changes.

The minimum target for reserves to be held is currently established as an amount sufficient to maintain ongoing operations and programmes measured for a set period of three months. At the last financial year (23/24) our unrestricted reserves were £38,777 (compared with £124,261 at the end of 22/23). Our unrestricted reserves for the end of the current financial year (24/25) were higher, holding £119,766, recorded in the financial records as Unrestricted Funds. £68,777 is held as unrestricted designated funds and £50,989 is held as unrestricted general funds. The Funds will be funded and available in cash or cash equivalent funds.

Building resilience, we need to hold this amount in operating reserve to set aside funds to meet essential future spending on projects that will not be met from future income in the short term. We have a clear and realistic fundraising strategy (incorporating trusts and foundations, sponsorship, public donations, direct activity income, and other earned income) and a strategy to reduce expenditure where possible across core budgets. These strategies are planned to re-build Contingency and Welfare reserves to £95k by 2027.

Reviewing and reporting on the Reserves Policy
The Reserves Policy is regularly reviewed by the leadership team and reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Board of Trustees to make sure we aren't setting aside too much or too little.

We will use our trustees' annual report to tell donors, funders and other stakeholders:
• why we need to keep money aside instead of spending it on our charity's aims;
• how much we hold in reserve;
• why we need to hold this amount in reserve;
• what our reserves can be spent on.

Reserves are recorded in the financial records as Unrestricted General Funds. The Funds will be funded and available in cash or cash equivalent funds.

Level of reserves
At the last financial year (23/24) our unrestricted reserves were £38,777 (compared with £124,261 at the end of 22/23). Our unrestricted reserves for the end of the current financial year (24/25) is £119,766.

Our strategies to re-build reserves are as follows:
1. A clear and realistic fundraising strategy (incorporating trusts and foundations, sponsorship, public donations, direct activity income, and other earned income) reviewed and monitored on a monthly basis by the leadership team.
2. A strategy to reduce expenditure where possible across core budgets (incl. overheads and marketing).
3. Increasing our partnership work to reduce costs where possible through in-kind support.
4. Implement our full cost recovery model to ensure we are recouping costs for projects that require use of core resources.
5. Establish income generating strands of work that increase the level of unrestricted funds.

This strategy is now implemented to build-up the reserves over 4 years (2023-27) to £95k, revised in 2024/25.

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

Statement of Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of The Spark Arts for Children for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland". The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions in the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its 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 apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can 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 governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Small companies provision statement

This report has been prepared in accordance with the small companies regime under the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 17 November 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



.....

M Reza
Trustee

The Spark Arts for Children

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of The Spark Arts for Children ('the Company')

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Spark Arts for Children ('the Company')
I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

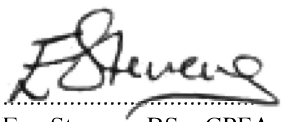
As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), which is one of the listed bodies.
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

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



Eva Stevens, BSc, CPFA, employee of Community Accounting Plus
member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

Units 1 & 2 North West
41 Talbot Street
Nottingham
NG1 5GL

17 November 2025

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	188,887	-	188,887	176,634
Charitable activities	3	30,803	311,861	342,664	268,751
Investment income	5	2,054	-	2,054	1,619
Total income		221,744	311,861	533,605	447,004
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	6	(140,755)	(235,203)	(375,958)	(432,173)
Total expenditure		(140,755)	(235,203)	(375,958)	(432,173)
Net income		80,989	76,658	157,647	14,831
Net movement in funds		80,989	76,658	157,647	14,831
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		38,777	129,001	167,778	152,947
Total funds carried forward	13	119,766	205,659	325,425	167,778

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The funds breakdown for the period is shown in note 13.

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

These are the figures for the previous accounting period and are included for comparative purposes

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	2	176,634	-	176,634
Charitable activities	3	15,440	253,311	268,751
Investment income	5	1,619	-	1,619
Total income		193,693	253,311	447,004
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	6	(279,177)	(152,996)	(432,173)
Total expenditure		(279,177)	(152,996)	(432,173)
Net (expenditure)/income		(85,484)	100,315	14,831
Net movement in funds		(85,484)	100,315	14,831
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		124,261	28,686	152,947
Total funds carried forward	13	38,777	129,001	167,778

The notes on pages 16 to 25 form an integral part of these financial statements.

The Spark Arts for Children

(Registration number: 05254229)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	9	841	2,781
Current assets			
Debtors	10	1,815	23,974
Cash at bank and in hand	11	335,937	190,703
		337,752	214,677
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	(13,168)	(49,680)
Net current assets		324,584	164,997
Net assets		325,425	167,778
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	13	205,659	129,001
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		119,766	38,777
Total funds	13	325,425	167,778

For the financial year ending 31 March 2025 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 12 to 25 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 17 November 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



.....
M Reza
Trustee



.....
M E Candler
Trustee

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash income		157,647	14,831
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation		1,940	1,899
Investment income	5	(2,054)	(1,619)
		157,533	15,111
Working capital adjustments			
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	10	22,159	(16,241)
Decrease in creditors	12	(21,871)	(38,726)
(Decrease)/increase in deferred income	12	(14,641)	19,641
Net cash flows from operating activities		143,180	(20,215)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	2,054	1,619
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	9	-	(2,498)
Net cash flows from investing activities		2,054	(879)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		145,234	(21,094)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		190,703	211,797
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		335,937	190,703
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds			
Increase/(decrease) in cash		145,234	(21,094)
Net funds at 1 April 2024		190,703	211,797
Net funds at 31 March 2025		335,937	190,703

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

1 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates
The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

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

Basis of preparation
The Spark Arts for Children 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 notes.

Going concern
The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

The trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of one year from the date of approval of the financial statements.

Income and endowments
Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

Investment income

Dividends are recognised once the dividend has been declared and notification has been received of the dividend due.

Expenditure

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Taxation

The charity 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 charity 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.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £500.00 or more are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Plant & machinery	20% on cost
Computer equipment	33% on cost

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents
Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Trade creditors
Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Fund structure
Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds set aside for specific purposes at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted income funds are those grants for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Pensions and other post retirement obligations
The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charity has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Donations and legacies;			
Donations from individuals	380	380	587
Donations from community groups	188,507	188,507	176,047
	188,887	188,887	176,634

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Grants & donations	-	301,861	301,861	218,790
Sponsorships	14,950	10,000	24,950	-
Additional activities	-	-	-	15,500
Partner fees and reimbursement	-	-	-	19,307
Sundry	-	-	-	95
School sales & tickets	15,853	-	15,853	15,059
	30,803	311,861	342,664	268,751

4 Grants & donations

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
Arts Council England	171,047	5,000	176,047
Braunstone Children, Young People and Family Centre	-	6,000	6,000
Inspire	7,460	21,601	29,061
LCC Arts & Museums	-	2,500	2,500
LCC Festival Grant 2024	10,000	-	10,000
LCC Small Wonders	-	4,500	4,500
Leicester Neighbourhood Services	-	56,000	56,000
Leicestershire County Council	-	3,000	3,000
The National Foundation	-	83,260	83,260
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	-	120,000	120,000
Sundry donations	380	-	380
	188,887	301,861	490,748

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	2,054	2,054	1,619
	2,054	2,054	1,619

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Artistic/ Delivery	26,811	85,935	112,746	108,759
Project Overhead	6,057	3,446	9,503	27,097
Access & contingency	-	3,684	3,684	3,282
Direct activity staff costs	252	1,120	1,372	-
Freelance costs	21,892	-	21,892	18,703
Wages, social security, pensions	46,668	141,018	187,686	210,098
Rent and rates	11,159	-	11,159	10,409
Travelling	529	-	529	3,178
Audit & Accountancy	2,172	-	2,172	3,406
Company development	2,900	-	2,900	5,462
Office expenses	1,517	-	1,517	3,946
Insurance	1,571	-	1,571	1,294
Legal & Professional fees	2,571	-	2,571	48
Consultancy & subscriptions	1,364	-	1,364	11,809
Advertising & Promotion	10,401	-	10,401	15,731
Earned income costs	180	-	180	180
Access expenses	1,800	-	1,800	-
Research & development	164	-	164	5,873
Bank charges	199	-	199	142
I.T & Computing	608	-	608	424
Depreciation	1,940	-	1,940	2,332
	140,755	235,203	375,958	432,173

7 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2025 £	2024 £
Depreciation of fixed assets	1,940	2,332

8 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	167,665	187,839
Social security costs	10,148	17,834
Pension costs	3,767	4,425
Redundancy costs	6,106	-
	187,686	210,098

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2025 No	2024 No
Average number of employees	7	13

6 (2024 - 13) of the above employees participated in the Defined Contribution Pension Schemes.

Contributions to the employee pension schemes for the year totalled £3,767 (2024 - £4,425).

During the year, the charity made redundancy and/or termination payments which totalled £6,106 (2024 - £Nil).

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £92,197 (2024 - £120,543).

9 Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment £	Plant & machinery £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2024	15,400	5,502	20,902
At 31 March 2025	15,400	5,502	20,902
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2024	12,619	5,502	18,121
Charge for the year	1,940	-	1,940
At 31 March 2025	14,559	5,502	20,061
Net book value			
At 31 March 2025	841	-	841
At 31 March 2024	2,781	-	2,781

10 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	90	21,120
Prepayments	1,725	2,854
	1,815	23,974

11 Cash and cash equivalents

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash on hand	110	170
Cash at bank	335,827	190,533
	335,937	190,703

12 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	2,509	12,415
Other taxation and social security	3,325	3,617
Other creditors	-	1,014
Accruals	2,334	12,993
Deferred income	5,000	19,641
	13,168	49,680

13 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General	-	221,744	(140,755)	(30,000)	50,989
Designated					
Contingency & Welfare	38,777	-	-	30,000	68,777
Total unrestricted funds	38,777	221,744	(140,755)	-	119,766
Restricted funds					
Schools	71,852	137,500	(84,243)	-	125,109
Early Years	48,753	152,760	(123,424)	-	78,089
Libraries	8,396	21,601	(27,536)	-	2,461
Total restricted funds	129,001	311,861	(235,203)	-	205,659
Total funds	167,778	533,605	(375,958)	-	325,425

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

Schools Fund - Building Brave Spaces
Funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation this program explores how performing arts pedagogy can improve children's voice and agency in both the classroom and across whole schools.

Early Years Fund
Music Champions is funded by Youth Music and partner organisations Leicestershire Music and Leicester City Council Early Help, to develop a new Early Years Music network: supporting musicians and early years practitioners; and promoting the role music plays in the development of children aged 0-4 years. This project will continue through to 2025.

Library Fund
The Spark has been commissioned by Inspire - Culture, Learning, Libraries, to programme work for children and families into other libraries in Nottinghamshire. The agreement is for a 3-year period up to 2026.

General Funds
The Spark is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation with awarded funding for a 4-year period to 2027. Funding received supported core functions that contributed to the delivery of the various strands.

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General	64,261	178,634	(238,836)	(4,059)	-
Designated					
Vital Spark - Artists	-	443	(17,147)	16,704	-
Contingency & Welfare	60,000	-	-	(21,223)	38,777
Festival	-	14,616	(23,194)	8,578	-
	60,000	15,059	(40,341)	4,059	38,777
Total unrestricted funds	124,261	193,693	(279,177)	-	38,777
Restricted					
Vital Spark - Artists	-	31,878	(31,878)	-	-
Schools	19,761	92,500	(40,409)	-	71,852
Early Years	-	107,313	(58,560)	-	48,753
Libraries	8,925	21,620	(22,149)	-	8,396
Total restricted funds	28,686	253,311	(152,996)	-	129,001
Total funds	152,947	447,004	(432,173)	-	167,778

14 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted			
	General £	Designated £	Restricted £	2025 Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	841	-	-	841
Current assets	57,816	68,777	211,159	337,752
Current liabilities	(9,843)	-	(3,325)	(13,168)
Total net assets	48,814	68,777	207,834	325,425

	Unrestricted			
	General £	Designated £	Restricted £	2024 Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	2,781	-	-	2,781
Current assets	46,899	38,777	129,001	214,677
Current liabilities	(49,680)	-	-	(49,680)
Total net assets	-	38,777	129,001	167,778

15 Fees payable to independent examiner

During the period, the fees payable (excluding VAT) to the charity's independent examiner Community Accounting Plus are analysed as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Independent examination	1,435	1,380
	1,435	1,380

16 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

17 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

THE SPARK ARTS FOR CHILDREN

England & Wales - Charity number 1106952

Accounts

Company registration number: 05254229

Charity registration number: 1106952

The Spark Arts for Children

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Community Accounting Plus
Units 1 & 2 North West
41 Talbot Street
Nottingham
NG1 5GL

The Spark Arts for Children

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The Spark Arts for Children

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees	R Lee P Bennett J Mann S L M Guthrie M Reza M E Candler
Secretary	T Kidder
Charity Registration Number	1106952
Company Registration Number	05254229
Registered Office	LCB Depot 31 Rutland Street Leicester Leicestershire LE1 1RE
Independent Examiner	John O'Brien, employee of Community Accounting Plus Units 1 & 2 North West 41 Talbot Street Nottingham NG1 5GL
Bankers	Metro Bank One Southhampton Row London WC1B 5HA Santander Santander Business Banking operations Sunderland SR43 4FW

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Trustees and officers

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:	R Lee
	P Bennett
	J Mann
	V Mistry (resigned 23 October 2023)
	S L M Guthrie
	M Reza
	M E Candler
Secretary:	T Kidder

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. It is operated under the rules of its memorandum and articles of association dated 8 October 2004. It has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to £1.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

To help deliver its public benefit, the charity aims to have an overall balance of skills, aptitude and representation within its Trustees.

The charity maintains a Board of a minimum 8 and maximum 12 trustees. Regular skills audits are undertaken by the Chair, and further recruitment is undertaken where areas are felt to be underrepresented.

An equalities survey is undertaken yearly and any recruitment aims for a balance across gender, ethnicity sexual orientation, disability and lower socio economic groups.

The charity aims to have one "young" Trustee aged between 18-24.

One third (or the number nearest one third) of the Trustees must retire at each AGM, and may be re-elected.

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2023.

The trustees have adopted 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) (effective 1 January 2019).

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

Objectives and activities

Objects and aims

The charity's objects per the Articles of Association are as follows:

To advance the education and development of children and young people in Leicester, Leicestershire and beyond through a range of activities, including the organisation and promotion of an annual arts festival, consisting of workshops and productions of dance, theatre and other performing arts; presented in theatres, community venues and schools.

Mission, vision and values

Mission
Working in partnership to empower children to thrive, we explore the difference culture makes through arts engagement, creative interactions and cultural connections, enabling children's voices to be heard, their creativity supported, and their cultural values understood.

Vision
Extraordinary experiences for children, sparking creativity and change.

Values
Our values underpin everything we do:

• A fair and safe environment where everyone is valued
• The space for big ideas to grow
• We are curious and love learning
• Empowering children and young people to be amazing

Since 2004, The Spark has played an important role in developing, restoring and maintaining Leicester's and Leicestershire's cultural identity, encouraging children's creative potential in nurseries, schools, playgrounds and homes, libraries, museums, theatres and art centres. We promote children's cultural values and communities through strong partnerships, creative practices and innovation.

A key strength is how we support artists at different stages in their careers and practices. Conceived in 2018, Vital Spark is a movement that addresses the lack of diversity in live and digital performance for young audiences. We provide professional development opportunities and co-commission and produce new work, supporting artists who are underrepresented in the creative and cultural industries. In turn, these artists support us in our capacity to be a more inclusive and accessible organisation.

Our ambition is for our work to be as thought-provoking as it is playful, and for our organisation to be as creative as our festival and cultural programmes are. Our goal is to change as children's communities change and to continue to be relevant to all children.

Strategic objectives
The following strategic objectives provide continuity during change and the foundations for a structured period of business growth from 2023. Our strategic objectives:

• Commission and produce a high quality and diverse cultural programme for children in cultural venues, schools and libraries, enabling children, their families and communities to experience the richness of the arts.

• Deliver a co-created children's arts festival recognised nationally and connected internationally for the representation, ambition and innovation of the programme, and valued for its contribution to the quality of life for children.

• Champion arts-based learning and teaching for creativity, collaborating to ensure children locally access and influence arts and cultural opportunities, no matter where they start in life, as their right to creativity, agency and play.

• Grow an entrepreneurial culture, where our historic 'projects' are realigned to drive the mission and vision of the organisation: building creativity in strategy towards sustainability; ensuring diverse cultural governance and leadership; and a step change on business development with a growth plan that diversifies income generation.

Our outcomes
Our values and strategies are strongly aligned with Arts Council England's Investment Principles and Outcomes long term. We deliver Creative People, Cultural Communities and A Creative and Cultural Country outcomes, principally:

• Providing high-quality early years activities that reach families from a wider range of backgrounds;
• Widening and improving opportunities for children and young people to take part in creative activities inside schools;
• Widening and improving opportunities for children and young people to take part in creative activities outside schools;
• Supporting children and young people to develop their creative skills and potential;
• Improving access to a full range of cultural opportunities wherever people live;
• Working with communities to better understand and respond to their needs and interests, resulting in increased cultural engagement and the wide range of social benefits it brings;
• Working collaboratively through place-based partnerships to support and involve communities in high quality culture, improve creative and cultural education for children and young people, improve health and wellbeing; through creative and cultural activity, build skills and capacity in the cultural sector and grow its economic impact;
• Supporting new types of creative practice, new forms of cultural content and new ways of reaching new and existing audiences and participants;
• Ensuring people have opportunities to sustain their careers and fulfil their potential in the creative industries, especially those who are currently under-represented.

Significant activities

Organisational change & New staffing (April - December 2023)

Over 2023 we embedded a number of new staff to roles including Hazel Townsend as Creative Producer: Learning, Tatiana Kidder, Operations and Finance Manager and James Lawrence Digital marketing and Community Engagement Officer.

During the period, Tara Lopez the Executive Director, secured a new role and departed the organisation in October 2023. Tom Newton filled the temporary role of Executive Producer whilst the Trustees of the organisation implemented an organisational review of the operating structure of the organisation. In January 2024 the Trustees began an independent review of the organisation with the support of Nu Leaf.

We spent the last quarter of 2023/24 and the first quarter of 2024/25 undertaking the review and evaluating and assessing our organisation and the economic landscape for where our work can have the most impact as we move forward. As with most Arts Organisations our size, our work is historically funded through Trusts and Foundations, alongside our annual investment from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation. The new organisational structure is being phased in as we recruit into new roles and finalise the changes to existing roles. This work will be completed during Autumn 2024.

Trustees' Report

Our approach to co-creation
Our work is evidence-based and increasingly co-constructed between artists, teachers and children to improve outcomes for children, families, artists and creative practitioners. Co-creating evaluation will be key to our success moving forward. In 2023 we refined our theory of change and implemented a new organisation-wide evaluation framework design to deliver our Quality and Ambition Investment Principle and integrate data on outcomes and outputs across Inclusivity and Relevance, Environmental Responsibility and Dynamism development and activity delivery.

The Mega Bosses of Spark - Child Action Group
We also implemented the organisation's Child Action group. A group of children who attend monthly sessions with members of the team. They help to shape the work of the charity by creating their Quality and Ambition Manifesto, which is created to enable our work to be guided by our principal benefactors- Children. As part of the process, they have renamed themselves The Mega Bosses of Spark. Their Quality and Ambition Manifesto can be summarised as the following main priorities.

• Equity For All
• Everyone had the opportunity to join in
• Exciting and enjoyable for all
• We stand for everyone around the world to feel welcome
• Be fun, less boring

Twice a year the Executive team and Trustees feedback to the Child Action group on the actions they have taken to deliver their manifesto across the organisation and provide an opportunity for a feedback loop of progress, actions and development.

Our headlines for 2023-2024 are presented below, starting with a data snapshot and followed by a handful of highlights to demonstrate how our work is reaching new audiences.

Employed 34 artists (compared to 79 in 2022-23)

Programmed 52 performances (compared to 78 in 2022-23)

Engaging 9076 in person & 8246 social media totally 17,322 (compared to 23,209 in 2022-23)

And 3762 children and families (formal & informal learning & participation) actively participating (compared to 6,540 in 2022-23)

Public benefit

In summary, the main activities The Spark Arts for Children delivers throughout the year for public benefit is a range of activities including artistic skills and capacity building, performing arts, visual arts and digital arts presentations, productions and participation workshops and events. Because these activities take place in schools, libraries, theatres, arts centres, museums, outdoors and online, we help to advance children's learning and development, delivering social, economic and cultural education outcomes for children in Leicester, Leicestershire and the East Midlands.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

Achievements and performance

Experiencing the extraordinary

Spark Saturdays
We hosted 7 Spark Saturday events in partnership with a number of community and cultural venues across the city. These were low cost/free events that enabled members of the community to experience and take part in a number of creative/cultural activities. We worked with theatre companies, musicians and dance companies to present a diverse range of activities that enabled those who wouldn't ordinarily engage in arts and culture to engage in high quality events.

Festival model development
Through the delivery of the Spark Saturdays and other partner events we were able to work through our partnerships with all of the organisations who work with us to deliver our Annual Spark Festival. Whilst the Spark Festival was not delivered in this financial year- the activities that are contained without our usual festival week were spread across the year. This enabled us to text and explore the community engagement opportunities for each activity to then deepen how we position it as part of our Festival in 2024.

Building a diverse workforce

Vital Spark Relationship Programme and Ideas Fund
Since 2018, 58 artists have engaged in Vital Spark: in development (e.g. go-sees, masterclasses, networking events); with investment in ideas (e.g. ideas fund, fundraising support, R&D, providing and brokering specialist guidance, mentoring); producing full commissions (partnership development, co-commissioning investment); and Seat at the Table events (Code of Care development and peer to peer learning).

In 2023-24, artists David "Stickman" Higgins, Tanya Akrofi and Sarah Blanc shared work in development at the 'Vital Spark symposium' event. Our Relationship Artists Tanya Akrofi, Tandeka Williams, Sarah Kolawole undertook an artist residency or masterclasses and coaching, attended go and see trips, and joined the festival as part of the delegate programme. We established and worked internationally on this project with Baboro International Children's festival, alongside 4 Irish artists.

Vital Spark Symposium
In March we worked in collaboration with our partner Attenborough Arts Centre, to host the Vital Spark Symposium. This 2 day event celebrated 5 years of the programme and brought together artists, producers, programmers and organisations from across the country to debate, reflect, talk and drive towards action of making the performance for Young Audiences landscape to be more relevant and inclusive. It was an extremely successful 2 days with over 20 artists present, through panel discussions and masterclasses and well as attended by 64 industry delegates from across the country.

A child's right to play
Leicester experiences significant deprivation. Before Covid-19, some Leicester communities faced inequalities and exclusion - Leicester had the 7th highest poverty rate of 181 urban authorities (Leicester City Council, 2020). It is widely accepted that lockdown had a detrimental effect on the most isolated and vulnerable, particularly children. Our work delivers cultural opportunity and equitable outcomes.

Small Wonders
Whilst there was no direct delivery regarding this project in this year, we delivered a number of development workshops with stakeholders to begin the fundraising process towards the next iteration of Small Wonders, in partnerships with Leicester Libraries and Early help through our strong partnership with Leicester City Council. The project will recommence in October 2024.

Small Wonders continues to support exceptional creative pedagogy and practice showing growth potential for training and peer-to-peer learning, particularly for artists new to the industry or work in early years and early years practitioners. We will continue to build our partnerships towards sustainable engagement and funding.

Music Champions
The musicians training programme, developing craft applicable to early years settings which will culminate in September 2025. Delivered a transformative sector development project, increasing the skills and expertise of musicians. Working in partnership with Leicester City Council Neighbourhood Services and Early Help and Leicestershire Music Hub.

We've explored and tested the delivery model underpinned by two key principles: Equal partnership between musician and early years practitioner; and Child led music play leading to the most impact on the child. We now have grown an established talented and trained pool of local and regional freelance musicians (Music Champions), who work effectively in early years child development. Future improvements include increasing parental engagement, early years Continuing Professional Development and Learning resources for musicians and advocacy for music and the arts in early years practitioner training.

A child's right to creativity

At Your School Tour
With our ongoing commitment to ensure all children have access to high quality arts and culture, we delivered our At Your school programme to a number of schools in November.

Across 5 days we toured 3 productions to Leicester Primary schools Botown, a live fusion of Bollywood and soul music, Luna Loves Library Day, a musical adaptation of the book by Joseph Coelho and Plastic Drastic Fantastic, a stunning visual dance piece educating the audience in environmental responsibility. 3244 audience members experienced the productions across 23 performances.

Building Brave Spaces
In November 2023 we secured a grant from Paul Hamlyn Foundation to develop our Spark Learning offer. The project which began delivery in January 2024 will work with 8 schools in Leicester to specifically explore the impact of performing arts pedagogy on children voice and agency in the formal education system. The outcomes of the project will be used to drive in-school development of PSHE curriculum and wellbeing through a structured partnership model, which will include artist residency, creativity councils, takeover events and performances at their schools. in the first 3 months of project delivery 171 students and 8 teachers engaged in the introductory workshops.

Funding
The Spark Arts for Children receives National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding from Arts Council England, now confirmed for the period 2023 to 2026.

The Spark continues to receive the majority of its income from Arts Council England, Trusts and Foundations and Local Authorities across the breadth of our work in creative workforce development, libraries, schools and communities, including a core funding contribution from Leicester City Council for our annual festival. During the year the charity also received welcome support from corporate partners and individual donors, and these continue to be an important component of income generation.

At the beginning of 2023 we implemented the Development Working Group, a team of trustees and external business growth specialists to deliver business development objectives:
• Re-focus the role and responsibilities of the Development Subgroup to ensure strategic direction and future earning aligned to organisational values and growth
• Evaluate the strategic position of The Spark Arts for Children and the business
• Map and test a more enterprising mixed model of income and how risk can be better distributed
• Consider the key staff and systems resources required to deliver our Dynamism ambitions and priorities.

Financial review
Deferred restricted funds to 2024-25: £19,641 (2022-23 £48,750)

Restricted funds carried forward: £129,001 (2022-23 £28,686)

Unrestricted funds carried forward: £38,777 (2022-23 £124,261)

Totals reserves carried forward: £167,778 (2022-23 £152,947)

Policy on reserves

The purpose of the Reserves Policy is to explain the stability of the mission, employment, programmes and ongoing operations of the organisation and to provide a source of internal funds for organisational priorities such as programme opportunity and capacity and skills building.

The Reserves Policy is implemented alongside other governance and financial policies, aligned to make sure policies and strategies are joined up to provide the structure, systems and practices to deliver our strategic goals and operational plans.

Reserves are planned to provide an internal source of funds for situations such as a sudden increase in expenses, one-time unbudgeted expenses, unanticipated loss in funding, or uninsured losses. Reserves are also intended to provide an internal source of funds where the company permanently ceases charitable activities and must close operations.

Our reserves are used to demonstrate and build resilience. As such, they serve a dynamic role and are regularly reviewed and adjusted in response to both internal and external changes.

The target for reserves to be held is currently established as an amount sufficient to maintain ongoing operations and programmes measured for a set period of three months.

Reviewing and reporting on the Reserves Policy
The Reserves Policy is regularly reviewed by the leadership team and reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Board of Trustees to make sure we aren't setting aside too much or too little.

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

We will use our trustees' annual report to tell donors, funders and other stakeholders.
• why we need to keep money aside instead of spending it on our charity's aims;
• how much we hold in reserve;
• why we need to hold this amount in reserve;
• what our reserves can be spent on.

Reserves are recorded in the financial records as Unrestricted General Funds. The Funds will be funded and available in cash or cash equivalent funds.

Level of reserves
At the last financial year (22/23) our unrestricted reserves were £124,261(compared with £184,225 at the end of 21/22). Our unrestricted reserves for the end of the current financial year (23/24) is £38,777.

Our strategies to re-build reserves are as follows:-
1. A clear and realistic fundraising strategy (incorporating trusts & foundations, sponsorship, public donations, direct activity income, and other earned income) reviewed and monitored on a monthly basis by the leadership team.
2. A strategy to reduce expenditure where possible across core budgets (incl. overheads and marketing).
3. Increasing our partnership work to reduce costs where possible through inkind support.
4. Implement our full cost recovery modelto ensure we are recouping costs for projects that require use of core resources.
5. Establish income generating strands of work that increase the level of unrestricted funds.

This strategy is now implemented to build-up the reserves over 4 years (2023-2027) to £95k.

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

Statement of Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of The Spark Arts for Children for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland". The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions in the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its 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 apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can 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 governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Small companies provision statement

This report has been prepared in accordance with the small companies regime under the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 19-9-24 and signed on its behalf by:

.....

M Reza
Trustee

The Spark Arts for Children

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of The Spark Arts for Children ('the Company')

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Spark Arts for Children ('the Company')
I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

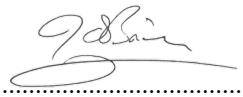
As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member and Fellow of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners, which is one of the listed bodies.
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

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



.....
John O'Brien MSc, FAIA, FCCA, FCIE, employee of Community Accounting Plus
Fellow of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners

Units 1 & 2 North West
41 Talbot Street
Nottingham
NG1 5GL

Date:. 22/11/2024.....

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	176,634	-	176,634	181,541
Charitable activities	3	15,440	253,311	268,751	370,733
Investment income	5	1,619	-	1,619	518
Total income		193,693	253,311	447,004	552,792
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	6	(279,177)	(152,996)	(432,173)	(614,287)
Total expenditure		(279,177)	(152,996)	(432,173)	(614,287)
Net (expenditure)/income		(85,484)	100,315	14,831	(61,495)
Net movement in funds		(85,484)	100,315	14,831	(61,495)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		124,261	28,686	152,947	214,442
Total funds carried forward	13	38,777	129,001	167,778	152,947

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The funds breakdown for the period is shown in note 13.

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

These are the figures for the previous accounting period and are included for comparative purposes

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	2	181,541	-	181,541
Charitable activities	3	6,906	363,827	370,733
Investment income	5	518	-	518
Total income		188,965	363,827	552,792
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	6	(248,929)	(365,358)	(614,287)
Total expenditure		(248,929)	(365,358)	(614,287)
Net expenditure		(59,964)	(1,531)	(61,495)
Net movement in funds		(59,964)	(1,531)	(61,495)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		184,225	30,217	214,442
Total funds carried forward	13	124,261	28,686	152,947

The Spark Arts for Children

(Registration number: 05254229)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	9	2,781	2,182
Current assets			
Debtors	10	23,974	7,733
Cash at bank and in hand	11	190,703	211,797
		214,677	219,530
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	(49,680)	(68,765)
Net current assets		164,997	150,765
Net assets		167,778	152,947
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	13	129,001	28,686
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		38,777	124,261
Total funds	13	167,778	152,947

For the financial year ending 31 March 2024 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 12 to 26 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 19-9-24 and signed on their behalf by:

.....
M Reza
Trustee

.....
M E Candler
Trustee

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash income/(expenditure)		14,831	(61,495)
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation		1,899	1,617
Investment income	5	(1,619)	(518)
		15,111	(60,396)
Working capital adjustments			
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	10	(16,241)	14,569
Decrease in creditors	12	(19,085)	(90,425)
Net cash flows from operating activities		(20,215)	(136,252)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	1,619	518
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	9	(2,498)	(685)
Net cash flows from investing activities		(879)	(167)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents		(21,094)	(136,419)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		211,797	348,216
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		190,703	211,797
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds			
Decrease in cash		(21,094)	(136,419)
Net funds at 1 April 2023		211,797	348,216
Net funds at 31 March 2024		190,703	211,797

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

1 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates
The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

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

Basis of preparation
The Spark Arts for Children 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 notes.

Going concern
The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

The trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of one year from the date of approval of the financial statements.

Income and endowments
Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Investment income

Dividends are recognised once the dividend has been declared and notification has been received of the dividend due.

Expenditure
All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Taxation
The charity 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 charity 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.

Tangible fixed assets
Individual fixed assets costing £500.00 or more are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation and amortisation
Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Plant & machinery	20% on cost
Computer equipment	33% on cost

Trade debtors
Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents
Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Trade creditors
Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Fund structure
Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds set aside for specific purposes at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted income funds are those grants for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Pensions and other post retirement obligations
The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charity has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Donations and legacies;			
Donations from individuals	587	587	4,994
Donations from community groups	176,047	176,047	176,547
	176,634	176,634	181,541

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
	Designated £	General £	£	£	£
Grants & donations	-	-	218,790	218,790	319,561
Sponsorships	-	-	-	-	10,650
Additional activities	-	-	15,500	15,500	29,324
Gift Aid	-	-	-	-	1,220
Partner fees and reimbursement	-	381	18,926	19,307	-
Membership	-	-	-	-	5,220
Sundry	-	-	95	95	4,758
School sales & tickets	15,059	-	-	15,059	-
	15,059	381	253,311	268,751	370,733

4 Grants & donations

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
ACE	176,047	-	176,047
Braunstone Children, Young People and Family Centre	-	440	440
Children in Need	-	10,000	10,000
Donations	587	-	587
Edith Murphy Foundation	-	5,000	5,000
Inspire	-	26,600	26,600
LCC Early Help MC 23-24	-	3,000	3,000
Leicester City Council	-	3,000	3,000
Leics Music for MC 23-24	-	3,000	3,000
Music champions 23-26	-	42,750	42,750
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	-	80,000	80,000
The National Foundation	-	45,000	45,000
	176,634	218,790	395,424

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	1,619	1,619	518
	1,619	1,619	518

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
	Designated £	General £	£	£	£
Artistic/ Delivery	37,939	-	70,820	108,759	-
Project Overhead	2,403	-	24,694	27,097	-
Access & contingency	-	-	3,282	3,282	-
Freelance fees and fund raising costs	-	-	-	-	55,800
Core activity	-	-	-	-	203,969
Projects	-	-	-	-	79,855
Direct activity staff costs	-	-	-	-	72,314
Wages, social security, pensions	-	205,259	23,542	228,801	143,924
Rent and rates	-	10,409	-	10,409	12,029
Insurance	-	1,294	-	1,294	882
Training & hospitality	-	-	-	-	2,256
Marketing	-	-	-	-	15,755
Sundries	-	-	-	-	1,124
Legal & Professional fees	-	3,454	-	3,454	4,273
Travelling	-	3,178	-	3,178	4,986
Repairs & renewals	-	-	-	-	1,678
Research & development	-	1,948	3,925	5,873	1,233
I.T & Computing	-	424	-	424	1,071
Consultancy & subscriptions	-	11,809	-	11,809	7,273
Room hire & hospitality	-	-	-	-	4,248
Overhead allocation	-	(26,733)	26,733	-	-
Depreciation	-	2,332	-	2,332	1,617
Office expenses	-	3,946	-	3,946	-
Company development	-	5,462	-	5,462	-
Advertising & Promotion	-	15,731	-	15,731	-
Earned income costs	-	180	-	180	-
Bank charges	-	142	-	142	-
	40,342	238,835	152,996	432,173	614,287

7 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year include:

	2024 £	2023 £
Depreciation of fixed assets	2,332	1,617

8 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	206,542	122,475
Social security costs	17,834	17,263
Pension costs	4,425	4,186
	228,801	143,924

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2024 No	2023 No
Average number of employees	13	13

13 (2023 - 13) of the above employees participated in the Defined Contribution Pension Schemes.

Contributions to the employee pension schemes for the year totalled £4,425 (2023 - £4,186).

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

9 Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment £	Plant & machinery £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2023	12,902	5,502	18,404
Additions	2,498	-	2,498
At 31 March 2024	15,400	5,502	20,902
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2023	10,720	5,502	16,222
Charge for the year	1,899	-	1,899
At 31 March 2024	12,619	5,502	18,121
Net book value			
At 31 March 2024	2,781	-	2,781
At 31 March 2023	2,182	-	2,182

10 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	21,120	5,901
Prepayments	2,854	1,832
	23,974	7,733

11 Cash and cash equivalents

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash on hand	170	69
Cash at bank	190,533	211,728
	190,703	211,797

12 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	12,415	13,247
Other taxation and social security	3,617	4,097
Other creditors	1,014	1,171
Accruals & deferred income	32,634	50,250
	49,680	68,765

13 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General	64,261	178,634	(238,836)	(4,059)	-
Designated					
Vital Spark - Artists	-	443	(17,147)	16,704	-
Festival	-	14,616	(23,194)	8,578	-
Contingency	60,000	-	-	(21,223)	38,777
	60,000	15,059	(40,341)	4,059	38,777
Total unrestricted funds	124,261	193,693	(279,177)	-	38,777
Restricted funds					
Vital Spark - Artists	-	31,878	(31,878)	-	-
Schools	19,761	92,500	(40,409)	-	71,852
Early Years	-	107,313	(58,560)	-	48,753
Libraries	8,925	21,620	(22,149)	-	8,396
Total restricted funds	28,686	253,311	(152,996)	-	129,001
Total funds	152,947	447,004	(432,173)	-	167,778

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

Festival Projects Fund
With the moving of the Festival to May 2024, the annual week-long festival that usually takes place was substituted in year with Sparky Saturdays, a series of cultural engagement in performing and combined arts. The At Your School programme, usually part of the week-long Festival took place in November. The funding of the Festival strand was solely provided by other earned income with sales from individual and school bookings.

Schools Fund
Building Brave Spaces
Funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation this program explores how performing arts pedagogy can improve children's voice and agency in both the classroom and across whole schools.

Child Action Group
The new Child Action Group will shape the future of The Spark to ensure our work is relevant to children and help drive our organisation, our events and activities over the coming years. Funds received from Edith Murphy has supported the development of this work.

Holiday Activity Fund - Summer Music Camp 2023

Folville Junior School commissioned The Spark to deliver a weeklong summer music camp of musical exploration and play delivered by 4 artists. The school funded this through a Holiday Activities and Food application.

The City Classroom
The City Classroom is a strategic cultural education partnership led and managed by The Spark and funded by The Mighty Creatives / Arts Council England. The partnership promotes, coordinates and advocates for cultural education and children and young people's creativity across Leicester and Leicestershire. Coordination of the partnership was handed over to University of Leicester in April 2023. Remaining funds were transferred to the University for planned activity delivered after April.

Early Years Fund
Music Champions is funded by Youth Music and partner organisations Leicestershire Music and Leicester City Council Early Help, to develop a new Early Years Music network: supporting musicians and early years practitioners; and promoting the role music plays in the development of children aged 0-4 years. This project will continue through to 2025.

Library Fund
The Spark has been commissioned by Inspire - Culture, Learning, Libraries, to programme work for children and families into other libraries in Nottinghamshire. The agreement is for a 3-year period up to 2026.

Vital Spark Fund
Vital Spark is a programme and approach which aims to address the gap of diverse led work in the children's performance sector through an artist development programme, ideas fund and the commissioning of new work, and a national partners network. Funds were received from partner venues supporting specific artist development, including Lincoln Arts Centre, Attenborough Arts Centre, Southbank Centre, Baboro Festival and Inspire.

General Funds
The Spark is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation with awarded funding for a 4-year period to 2027. Funding received supported core functions that contributed to the delivery of the various strands.

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds				
General				
General	124,225	172,910	(232,874)	64,261
Designated				
Vital Spark - Artists	-	16,055	(16,055)	-
Festival	8,455	58,716	(67,171)	-
Contingency	60,000	-	-	60,000
	68,455	74,771	(83,226)	60,000
Total unrestricted funds	192,680	247,681	(316,100)	124,261
Restricted				
Vital Spark - Artists	1,250	8,508	(9,758)	-
Schools	10,158	42,247	(32,644)	19,761
Early Years	1,340	107,150	(108,490)	-
Libraries	-	110,237	(101,312)	8,925
Spark Plus	9,014	36,969	(45,983)	-
Total restricted funds	21,762	305,111	(298,187)	28,686
Total funds	214,442	552,792	(614,287)	152,947

14 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted			
	General £	Designated £	Restricted £	2024 Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	2,781	-	-	2,781
Current assets	46,899	38,777	129,001	214,677
Current liabilities	(49,680)	-	-	(49,680)
Total net assets	-	38,777	129,001	167,778

	Unrestricted			
	General £	Designated £	Restricted £	2023 Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	2,182	-	-	2,182
Current assets	130,844	60,000	28,686	219,530
Current liabilities	(68,765)	-	-	(68,765)
Total net assets	64,261	60,000	28,686	152,947

15 Fees payable to independent examiner

During the period, the fees payable (excluding VAT) to the charity's independent examiner Community Accounting Plus (previously L&S Accountancy services) are analysed as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Independent examination	1,380	1,250
	1,380	1,250

16 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

17 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

THE SPARK ARTS FOR CHILDREN

England & Wales - Charity number 1106952

Accounts

Company registration number: 05254229
Charity registration number: 1106952

The Spark Arts for Children

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Community Accounting Plus
Units 1 & 2 North West
41 Talbot Street
Nottingham
NG1 5GL

The Spark Arts for Children

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The Spark Arts for Children

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees	R Lee P Bennett J Mann V Mistry S L M Guthrie M Reza M E Candler
Secretary	T Kidder
Charity Registration Number	1106952
Company Registration Number	05254229
Registered Office	LCB Depot 31 Rutland Street Leicester Leicestershire LE1 1RE
Independent Examiner	John O'Brien, employee of Community Accounting Plus Units 1 & 2 North West 41 Talbot Street Nottingham NG1 5GL
Bankers	Metro Bank One Southhampton Row London WC1B 5HA Santander Santander Business Banking operations Sunderland SR43 4FW

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Trustees and officers

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:	R Lee
	P Bennett (appointed 28 July 2022)
	A Parmar (resigned 14 March 2023)
	J Mann
	V Mistry
	S L M Guthrie
	M Reza
	M E Candler
Secretary:	H J P Roy (resigned 31 March 2023)
	T Kidder (appointed 6 March 2023)

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. It is operated under the rules of its memorandum and articles of association dated 8 October 2004. It has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to £1.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

To help deliver its public benefit, the charity aims to have an overall balance of skills, aptitude and representation within its Trustees.

The charity maintains a Board of a minimum 8 and maximum 12 trustees. Regular skills audits are undertaken by the Chair, and further recruitment is undertaken where areas are felt to be underrepresented.

An equalities survey is undertaken yearly and any recruitment aims for a balance across gender, ethnicity sexual orientation, disability and lower socio economic groups.

The charity aims to have one "young" Trustee aged between 18-24.

One third (or the number nearest one third) of the Trustees must retire at each AGM, and may be re-elected.

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

Objectives and activities

Objects and aims

The charity's objects per the Articles of Association are as follows:

To advance the education and development of children and young people in Leicester, Leicestershire and beyond through a range of activities, including the organisation and promotion of an annual arts festival, consisting of workshops and productions of dance, theatre and other performing arts; presented in theatres, community venues and schools.

Mission, vision and values

Mission
Working in partnership to empower children to thrive, we explore the difference culture makes through arts engagement, creative interactions and cultural connections, enabling children's voices to be heard, their creativity supported, and their cultural values understood.

Vision
Extraordinary experiences for children, sparking creativity and change.

Values
Our values underpin everything we do:

- A fair and safe environment where everyone is valued
- The space for big ideas to grow
- We are curious and love learning
- Empowering children and young people to be amazing

Since 2004, The Spark has played an important role in developing, restoring and maintaining Leicester's and Leicestershire's cultural identity, encouraging children's creative potential in nurseries, schools, playgrounds and homes, libraries, museums, theatres and art centres. We promote children's cultural values and communities through strong partnerships, creative practices and innovation.

A key strength is how we support artists at different stages in their careers and practices. Conceived in 2018, Vital Spark is a movement that addresses the lack of diversity in live and digital performance for young audiences. We provide professional development opportunities and co-commission and produce new work, supporting artists who are underrepresented in the creative and cultural industries. In turn, these artists support us in our capacity to be a more inclusive and accessible organisation.

Our ambition is for our work to be as thought-provoking as it is playful, and for our organisation to be as creative as our festival and cultural programmes are. Our goal is to change as children's communities change and to continue to be relevant to all children.

Trustees' Report

Strategic objectives
The following strategic objectives provide continuity during change and the foundations for a structured period of business growth from 2023. Our strategic objectives:

• Commission and produce a high quality and diverse cultural programme for children in cultural venues, schools and libraries, enabling children, their families and communities to experience the richness of the arts.

• Deliver a co-created children's arts festival recognised nationally and connected internationally for the representation, ambition and innovation of the programme, and valued for its contribution to the quality of life for children.

• Champion arts-based learning and teaching for creativity, collaborating to ensure children locally access and influence arts and cultural opportunities, no matter where they start in life, as their right to creativity, agency and play.

• Grow an entrepreneurial culture, where our historic 'projects' are realigned to drive the mission and vision of the organisation: building creativity in strategy towards sustainability; ensuring diverse cultural governance and leadership; and a step change on business development with a growth plan that diversifies income generation.

Our outcomes
Our values and strategies are strongly aligned with Arts Council England's Investment Principles and Outcomes long term. We deliver Creative People, Cultural Communities and A Creative and Cultural Country outcomes, principally:

• Providing high-quality early years activities that reach families from a wider range of backgrounds
• Widening and improving opportunities for children and young people to take part in creative activities inside schools
• Widening and improving opportunities for children and young people to take part in creative activities outside schools
• Supporting children and young people to develop their creative skills and potential
• Improving access to a full range of cultural opportunities wherever people live
• Working with communities to better understand and respond to their needs and interests, resulting in increased cultural engagement and the wide range of social benefits it brings
• Working collaboratively through place-based partnerships to support and involve communities in high quality culture, improve creative and cultural education for children and young people, improve health and wellbeing through creative and cultural activity, build skills and capacity in the cultural sector and grow its economic impact
• Supporting new types of creative practice, new forms of cultural content and new ways of reaching new and existing audiences and participants
• Ensuring people have opportunities to sustain their careers and fulfil their potential in the creative industries, especially those who are currently under-represented

Significant activities

Organisational change
We implemented a new leadership structure in 2022. We separated artistic and executive functions and created new roles: Artistic Director and Executive Director, which together with Associate Company and Associate Director, form the leadership team. The structure provides Trustees with stronger clarity of purpose and clearer lines of oversight. Artistic Director Christopher Gorry started in July 2022. Securing business continuity and leadership progression, former Trustee/Interim Executive Director, Karen Birch, will step down in in July 2023 following handover to the new Executive Director Tara Lopez from May 2023.

Artistic Director Christopher Gorry, an expert in co-creation and child action, drives our equitable model of performing arts production and pedagogy. Executive Director Tara Lopez an expert in diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging practices will drive the integration of artistic, participatory and equality policies and practices, co-constructing and implementing the business plan with primary responsibility for finance, fundraising, operations and governance activities. Associate Director Trina Haldar is responsible for directing the Spark Festival, whilst Associate Company Daryl & Co actions strategies for artist development. Collectively, the leadership team ensure our work is accessible and inclusive, socially responsible, financially and environmentally sustainable.

Systems change
We are committed to understanding lived experience of inequalities in our work. We believe organisation-wide creativity promotes plurality of perspectives, constructive challenge, and innovation. Staff and stakeholder voice, experience, expertise and shared learning informs continuous improvement to ensure our work is more representative, outcomes more equitable and practice more inclusive. 60% or more of our senior leadership self-identify as from an educationally or economically deprived background.

Driven by our Equality Policy and Action Plan, in 2022-23 we tested and implemented a Dynamic Recruitment model to drive access and inclusion in the recruitment of staff and artists (and will use this approach in the recruitment of new trustees in the near future). We encourage applications from people who are underrepresented in the creative and cultural industries, particularly people from Asian, Black or ethnically diverse backgrounds, who are LGBTQIA+, who define as D/deaf, disabled or neurodivergent and/or from low socio-economic backgrounds. 80% of applicants who attended interviews told us they would not ordinarily have applied but did so because of our inclusive approach.

And we are committed to making good data-based decisions to continuously improve our work. Our work is evidence-based and increasingly co-constructed between artists, teachers and children to improve outcomes for children, families, artists and creative practitioners. Co-creating evaluation will be key to our success moving forward. In 2022 we refined our theory of change and implemented a new organisation-wide evaluation framework design to deliver our Quality and Ambition Investment Principle and integrate data on outcomes and outputs across Inclusivity and Relevance, Environmental Responsibility and Dynamism development and activity delivery.

Public benefit

In summary, the main activities The Spark Arts for Children delivers throughout the year for public benefit is a range of activities including artistic skills and capacity building, performing arts, visual arts and digital arts presentations, productions and participation workshops and events. Because these activities take place in schools, libraries, theatres, arts centres, museums, outdoors and online, we help to advance children's learning and development, delivering social, economic and cultural education outcomes for children in Leicester, Leicestershire and the East Midlands.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Achievements and performance
Our headlines for 2022-23 are presented below, starting with a data snapshot and followed by a handful of highlights to demonstrate how our work is reaching new audiences.

Employed 79 artists (compared to 51 in 2021-22)

Programmed 78 performances (compared to 228 in 2021-22)

Engaging 10,184 in person, 12,882 social media + 143 Just Giving supporters as audiences and participants (compared to 14,688 in 2021-22)

And 6,540 children and families (formal & informal learning & participation) actively participating (compared to 11,799 in 2021-22)

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Experiencing the extraordinary
From 13-19 February, we delivered Spark Festival 2023. Over 7 days, 7,600 children and their families experienced 95 events. The festival took place in 9 cultural venues and 7 libraries and community centres. Over 3,500 children saw a performance in their school or local library. We worked with 8 companies, supported 25 artists and involved 20 schools.

We sang, laughed, danced and put the world to rights with the children of Leicester. And we connected communities together in ways that only the arts do. The diverse range of work and access to the work was notable, as well as the future potential of artists supported via Vital Spark.

Building a diverse workforce
Since 2018, 49 artists have engaged in Vital Spark: in development (e.g. go-sees, masterclasses, networking events); with investment in ideas (e.g. ideas fund, fundraising support, R&D, providing and brokering specialist guidance, mentoring); producing full commissions (partnership development, co-commissioning investment); and Seat at the Table events (Code of Care development and peer to peer learning).

In 2022-23, artists Liga Orlovska, Iryna Muha, Bisola Elizabeth Alabi and Chad Taylor shared work in development at the 'Vital Spark Ignites' event during the festival. Our Relationship Artists Brigitte Aphrodite, Naomi Joseph, Siobhan Wedgeworth and Ashley Jordan undertook an artist residency or masterclasses and coaching, attended go and see trips, and joined the festival as part of the delegate programme.

A child's right to play
Leicester experiences significant deprivation. Before Covid-19, some Leicester communities faced inequalities and exclusion - Leicester had the 7th highest poverty rate of 181 urban authorities (Leicester City Council, 2020). It is widely accepted that lockdown had a detrimental effect on the most isolated and vulnerable, particularly children. Our work delivers cultural opportunity and equitable outcomes.

Small Wonders
We deliver artist-facilitated storytelling and creative play for 0-4 year-olds in libraries and children's centres, improving children's social relationships and self-regulation. A unique partnership with Leicester City Council's Neighbourhood Services and Early Help, we build skills, empower parents and staff and embed creative play in local libraries.

In 2022 we delivered 324 sessions in libraries, nurseries, schools, children's centres, and community spaces, resulting in 7,754 child engagements and 9,542 children and adult attendances. High engagement across Family Play Days and relationship building (word-of-mouth) increased average session attendance by 16% over the project. For parents attending children's centres, 93% of parents involved support their child's communication and language through making sounds whilst 100% of parents provide more opportunity for music play at home. One parent shared: "We love the creativeness, the music, the crafts, the joy all the Spark Arts staff bring to the kids and my child is priceless. She has grown so much over the last year and this kind of stimulation and enjoyment is what is needed".

Small Wonders continues to support exceptional creative pedagogy and practice showing growth potential for training and peer-to-peer learning, particularly for artists new to the industry or work in early years and early years practitioners. We will continue to build our partnerships towards sustainable engagement and funding.

Music Champions
Our musicians training programme, developing craft applicable to early years settings, culminated in Summer 2022 with a knowledge and practice exchange event involving the partnership and creative early years workforce: Leicester City Council Neighbourhood Services and Early Help, Leicestershire Music Hub, De Montfort University, Philharmonia Orchestra, The City Classroom Cultural Education Partnership and The Mighty Creatives.

In 2022 we explored and tested the delivery model underpinned by two key principles: Equal partnership between musician and early years practitioner; and Child led music play leading to the most impact on the child. We now have an established talented and trained pool of local and regional freelance musicians (Music Champions), who work effectively in early years child development. Future improvements include increasing parental engagement, early years Continuing Professional Development and Learning resources for musicians and advocacy for music and the arts in early years practitioner training.

Our track record in partnership working to provide high-quality creative activities for early years children continues to improve, coordinated across libraries, community centres, children's centres, nurseries and schools. Small Wonders 2019-2022 and Music Champions 2022-23 are significant projects strongly aligned with Spark Festival and high-quality performances like Club Origami by Little Big Dance and Four Go Wild in Wellies by Indepen-Dance 4 - successfully balancing quality and access.

Belgrave Families Takeover
Artist Pasha Kincaid and Associate Director Trina Haldar co-created a range of cultural activities with local families, promoting everyday creativity. Children and their families taste tested for the best samosas to offer people coming to the library and explore how to make sustainable kites using ancient methods. And a number of local volunteers offered a diverse range of creative activities, including kite and banner making, seed planting, laughter yoga and dance performance and workshop by local company Aakash Odedra.

'Chai and chat' with provocations from the children and storytelling themed around activism providing a platform for children's voices to be heard. 410 people visited the event, sharing 200 samosas and 200 chai's and hot chocolates! The event finale included a walk through Cossington Park with Placards and a seed planting procession, where adults covered the heads of children with saris and children planted seeds, as a symbol of protection and new growth.

A child's right to creativity

Festival Takeovers

Spark Festival 2023 Takeovers were inspired by the festival vision and the concept of Speakers Corner. We trained children in creative and critical thinking skills and collaborated with artists in residence and creative practitioners to plan and present Festival Family days in arts and cultural venues in the city centre. Children from Creativity Councils co-delivered Takeovers, programming, marketing and evaluating the events through a creative process of training and activity facilitated by artists.

Festival 2023 Takeovers were delivered in partnership with four schools (Ash Field Academy, Falcons Primary School, Mayflower Primary School and Mellor Community Primary School), taking over Curve, Leicester Museum and Arts Gallery and Phoenix.

Library Takeover

Leicester poet Ty'rone Haughton and illustrator Sam Grubb worked with 120 children from Catherine Junior School on a creative writing project, creating a giant placard featuring slogans written by the children about issues they wanted to speak out about. The placard was exhibited at local Belgrave Library during the Festival.

A Venta-Centre filmed by RYF Films featured the children 'venting' about global issues they wanted to improve. The film is available on The Spark's YouTube.

From SparkPlus to Building Brave Spaces

The SparkPlus project completed in 2022/23. Sixteen schools took part in Spark Festival 2023. 90% of teachers told us that children benefit from festival performances. Teachers talked about increased pupil motivation and how enabling choice and empowerment increased children's productivity in class. Data collected since 2018 shows language development and how visual and physical content supports English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) child development whilst increasing confidence in non-specialist teachers, including how new presentation skills developed in a studio environment transfer to practice in the classroom environment.

We recognise that child mental health conditions are more common and increasing, with school closures and disrupted education contributing factors (The Health Foundation, 2022). Socio-demographic conditions deeply affect children: structural inequalities, access to learning, and education outcomes interrelating to increase inequality. Children have lost a sense of personal power, unable to build cultural capital. Our evidence-base indicates our work in schools empowers children and teachers equally - it gives them a voice and memorable experiences, increasing confidence and intrinsic motivation. We will use our learning from SparkPlus to co-create Building Brave Spaces and deliver our performing arts pedagogy in partnership with schools.

The City Classroom

The City Classroom was founded in 2015 by Attenborough Arts Centre, Charnwood Arts, Leicester Print Workshop, Soft Touch Arts, The Mighty Creatives and The Spark, who chaired and co-ordinated the partnership. The shared goal of the partnership is to increase quality cultural activity in schools and communities, resulting in improved cultural education and socio-cultural outcomes. In 2022/23 The Spark transitioned the partnership to a new lead partner, the University of Leicester to secure engagement, financial and partnership sustainability, establishing:

• Effective strategies for a new operational board accountable to advisory board and aligned to place-based cultural and education policy development
• Coordination capacity and a financial structure with new opportunity for strategic planning and evaluation and potential for in-house research
• Embedded evaluation framework and outcomes plan underpinned by a theory of change and cultural sector leadership commitment
• Foundations to scale the work in Leicester and Leicestershire, secondary education and creative career pathways, aligned to Leicester's creative industry strategy planning.

Regional Library Touring
Established in 2018, our tour circuit of 55 libraries combines library venues experienced in presenting performing arts for children, and libraries new to this work. Our touring work delivers three seasons yearly (subject to funding), a broad and balanced performing arts and participation programme for families (children age 3 to 11) and schools (primary and SEND).

In 2022/23 the Among Ideal Friends touring project promoted 3 productions, delivering 52 performances to an audience of 1,762 (1,075 children and 687 adults). Marvellous Marketing training upskilled 42 library staff across 3 workshops improving creative approaches to marketing, communications and audience development.

Commissioned by Inspire Culture Learning and Libraries, we also promoted 4 productions for libraries across Nottinghamshire, delivering 28 performances to an audience of 824 (364 children and 460 adults). 12 artist facilitated participatory workshops exploring puppet play and story beats engaged 228 children and adults, creating stronger engagement with shows and libraries as cultural spaces.

Funding
The Spark Arts for Children receives National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding from Arts Council England, now confirmed for the period 2023 to 2026.

The Spark continues to receive the majority of its income from Arts Council England, Trusts and Foundations and Local Authorities across the breadth of our work in creative workforce development, libraries, schools and communities, including a core funding contribution from Leicester City Council for our annual festival. During the year the charity also received welcome support from corporate partners and individual donors and these continue to be an important component of income generation.

At the beginning of 2023 we implemented the Development Working Group, a team of trustees and external business growth specialists to deliver business development objectives:

• Re-focus the role and responsibilities of the Development Subgroup to ensure strategic direction and future earning aligned to organisational values and growth
• Evaluate the strategic position of The Spark Arts for Children and the business
• Map and test a more enterprising mixed model of income and how risk can be better distributed
• Consider the key staff and systems resources required to deliver our Dynamism ambitions and priorities.

Financial review
Deferred restricted funds to 2023-24: £48,750 (to 2022-23: £124,691)

Restricted Funds carried forward: £28,686 (2021-22 £30,217)

Unrestricted Funds carried forward: £124,261 (2021-22 £184,225)

Totals reserves carried forward: £152,947 (2021-22 £214,442)

During the 2022/23 fiscal year we invested £87,953 from our unrestricted reserve to provide interim management, while we reviewed and restructured the Company with a particular focus on our senior leadership team. We took this step to strengthen our artistic leadership and programme, to enable us to pivot to a more advanced model of co-creation and to refocus our business model by increasing our executive capacity. To support this step change in our re-organisation we have established a new development group, comprised of a core group of trustees and a new business growth and change specialist. This task and finish group's purpose is to establish, embed and oversee a new fundraising and earning strategy that will replenish our unrestricted reserve to (a minimum) of £97,000 by the end of the 26/27 fiscal year.

Policy on reserves

The purpose of the Reserves Policy is to ensure the stability of the mission, employment, programmes and ongoing operations of the organisation and to provide a source of internal funds for organisational priorities such as programme opportunity and capacity and skills building. The Reserves Policy is implemented alongside other governance and financial policies, aligned to make sure policies and strategies are joined up to provide the structure, systems and practices to deliver our strategic goals and operational plans.

Reserves are planned to provide an internal source of funds for situations such as a sudden increase in expenses, one-time unbudgeted expenses, unanticipated loss in funding, or uninsured losses.

Reserves are also intended to provide an internal source of funds where the company permanently ceases charitable activities and must close operations.

Our reserves are used to demonstrate and build resilience. As such, they serve a dynamic role and are regularly reviewed and adjusted in response to both internal and external changes.

The minimum target for reserves to be held is currently established as an amount sufficient to maintain ongoing operations and programmes measured for a set period of three months.

Providing guidance for strategic and financial planning for the transition to a new leadership team in 2022 and the planning and submission of our application to Arts Council for 2023-2026 investment, the Operating Reserves and Contingency and Welfare Reserves have been consolidated.

In 2022, trustees identified that reserves would be reduced to sustain the organisation through the operational staff changes required in 2022-24. As such, at 31 March 2023 unrestricted reserves were £124,261 (compared to £184,225 at 31 March 2022). Our current reserves target is £60,000.

Two key strategies agreed to maintain the reserves are first, to raise the necessary funds in a timely way, and second, to diversify our funding base. These have been implemented to sustain the reserves over 4 years (2022-2026) at £60,000 plus an average £10k operational reserves per year for innovation and growth.

Reviewing and reporting on the Reserves Policy :
The Reserves Policy is regularly reviewed by the leadership team and reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Board of Trustees to make sure we aren't setting aside too much or too little.

We will use our trustees' annual report to tell donors, funders and other stakeholders:
- why we need to keep money aside instead of spending it on our charity's aims
- how much we hold in reserve
- why we need to hold this amount in reserve
- what our reserves can be spent on

Reserves are recorded in the financial records as Unrestricted General Funds. The Funds will be funded and available in cash or cash equivalent funds.

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

Statement of Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of The Spark Arts for Children for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland". The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions in the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its 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 apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can 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 governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Small companies provision statement

This report has been prepared in accordance with the small companies regime under the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 28/11/23 and signed on its behalf by:

.....

M Reza
Trustee

The Spark Arts for Children

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of The Spark Arts for Children ('the Company')

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Spark Arts for Children ('the Company')
I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

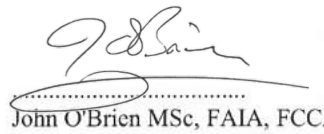
As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member and Fellow of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners, which is one of the listed bodies.
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

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



John O'Brien MSc, FAIA, FCCA, FCIE, employee of Community Accounting Plus
Fellow of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners

Units 1 & 2 North West
41 Talbot Street
Nottingham
NG1 5GL

Date: 1/12/2023

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	181,541	-	181,541	269,417
Charitable activities	3	6,906	363,827	370,733	435,596
Investment income	5	518	-	518	32
Total income		188,965	363,827	552,792	705,045
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		(143,924)	-	(143,924)	(152,510)
Charitable activities	6	(105,005)	(365,358)	(470,363)	(468,293)
Total expenditure		(248,929)	(365,358)	(614,287)	(620,803)
Net (expenditure)/income		(59,964)	(1,531)	(61,495)	84,242
Net movement in funds		(59,964)	(1,531)	(61,495)	84,242
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		184,225	30,217	214,442	130,200
Total funds carried forward	13	124,261	28,686	152,947	214,442

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The funds breakdown for the period is shown in note 13.

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

These are the figures for the previous accounting period and are included for comparative purposes

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	2	269,417	-	269,417
Charitable activities	3	51,650	383,946	435,596
Investment income	5	32	-	32
Total income		321,099	383,946	705,045
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds		(152,510)	-	(152,510)
Charitable activities	6	(114,564)	(353,729)	(468,293)
Total expenditure		(267,074)	(353,729)	(620,803)
Net income		54,025	30,217	84,242
Net movement in funds		54,025	30,217	84,242
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		130,200	-	130,200
Total funds carried forward	13	184,225	30,217	214,442

The Spark Arts for Children

(Registration number: 05254229)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	9	2,182	3,114
Current assets			
Debtors	10	7,733	22,302
Cash at bank and in hand	11	211,797	348,216
		219,530	370,518
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	(68,765)	(159,190)
Net current assets		150,765	211,328
Net assets		152,947	214,442
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	13	28,686	30,217
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		124,261	184,225
Total funds	13	152,947	214,442

For the financial year ending 31 March 2023 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 14 to 27 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 14/9/23 and signed on their behalf by:

.....
M Reza
Trustee

.....
M E Candler
Trustee

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash (expenditure)/income		(61,495)	84,242
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation		1,617	2,496
Investment income	5	(518)	(32)
		(60,396)	86,706
Working capital adjustments			
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	10	14,569	(1,612)
Decrease in creditors	12	(90,425)	(175,827)
Net cash flows from operating activities		(136,252)	(90,733)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	518	32
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	9	(685)	(2,572)
Net cash flows from investing activities		(167)	(2,540)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents		(136,419)	(93,273)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		348,216	441,489
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		211,797	348,216
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds			
Decrease in cash		(136,419)	(93,273)
Net funds at 1 April 2022		348,216	441,489
Net funds at 31 March 2023		211,797	348,216

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

1 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates
The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

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

Basis of preparation
The Spark Arts for Children 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 notes.

Going concern
The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

The trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of one year from the date of approval of the financial statements.

Income and endowments
Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Investment income

Dividends are recognised once the dividend has been declared and notification has been received of the dividend due.

Expenditure
All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Raising funds

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, the management of investments and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Taxation
The charity 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 charity 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.

Tangible fixed assets
Individual fixed assets costing £500.00 or more are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation and amortisation
Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Plant & machinery	20% on cost
Computer equipment	33% on cost

Trade debtors
Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents
Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Trade creditors
Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Fund structure
Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those grants for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Pensions and other post retirement obligations
The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charity has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Donations and legacies;			
Donations from individuals	4,994	4,994	7,832
Donations from community groups	176,547	176,547	261,585
	181,541	181,541	269,417

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Grants & donations	-	319,561	319,561	157,605
Sponsorships	4,000	6,650	10,650	4,600
Additional activities	1,686	27,638	29,324	67,622
Gift Aid	1,220	-	1,220	-
Projects	-	-	-	205,769
Membership	-	5,220	5,220	-
Sundry	-	4,758	4,758	-
	6,906	363,827	370,733	435,596

4 Grants & donations

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
ACE	176,047	-	176,047
AIF	-	34,960	34,960
Awards For All	-	10,000	10,000
Braunstone Beats	-	14,804	14,804
Campaign Donations	3,947	-	3,947
Children in Need	500	10,000	10,500
Cultural Life Fund	-	2,500	2,500
Didymus	-	4,000	4,000
George Earnest Ellis	-	1,000	1,000
Inspire	-	38,957	38,957
JRC	-	500	500
LCC	-	82,990	82,990
LCEP investment	-	2,500	2,500
Lottery	-	27,920	27,920
LRCF	-	3,000	3,000
Scop Arts	-	8,500	8,500
The Maud Elkington Trust	-	300	300
The National Found	-	54,539	54,539
The Oakland Foundation	-	2,000	2,000
TMC	-	11,500	11,500
Other	1,047	9,591	10,638
	181,541	319,561	501,102

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	518	518	32

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Freelance fees and fund raising costs	55,800	-	55,800	18,510
Core activity	199	203,770	203,969	175,613
Projects	-	79,855	79,855	131,607
Direct activity staff costs	-	72,314	72,314	105,498
Wages, social security, pensions	143,924	-	143,924	152,510
Rent and rates	12,029	-	12,029	10,542
Insurance	882	-	882	1,410
Telephone, post and stationery	-	-	-	1,950
Training & hospitality	2,256	-	2,256	2,991
Marketing	15,755	-	15,755	3,012
Sundries	1,124	-	1,124	256
Legal & Professional fees	4,273	-	4,273	2,350
Travelling	4,986	-	4,986	1,354
Repairs & renewals	1,678	-	1,678	1,597
Recruitment costs	-	-	-	5,230
Research & development	1,233	-	1,233	3,877
Plant and machinery	-	-	-	406
I.T & Computing	1,071	-	1,071	2,090
Consultancy & subscriptions	7,273	-	7,273	-
Room hire & hospitality	4,248	-	4,248	-
Overhead allocation	(9,419)	9,419	-	-
Depreciation	1,617	-	1,617	-
	248,929	365,358	614,287	620,803

7 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net (outgoing)/incoming resources for the year include:

	2023 £	2022 £
Depreciation of fixed assets	1,617	2,496

8 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	122,475	134,990
Social security costs	17,263	13,092
Pension costs	4,186	4,428
	143,924	152,510

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2023 No	2022 No
Average number of employees	13	13

Contributions to the employee pension schemes for the year totalled £4,186 (2022 - £4,428).

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

9 Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment £	Plant & machinery £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2022	12,217	5,502	17,719
Additions	685	-	685
At 31 March 2023	12,902	5,502	18,404

	Computer equipment £	Plant & machinery £	Total £
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2022	9,469	5,136	14,605
Charge for the year	1,251	366	1,617
At 31 March 2023	10,720	5,502	16,222
Net book value			
At 31 March 2023	2,182	-	2,182
At 31 March 2022	2,748	366	3,114

10 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	5,901	11,064
Prepayments	1,832	11,238
	7,733	22,302

11 Cash and cash equivalents

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash on hand	69	-
Cash at bank	211,728	348,216
	211,797	348,216

12 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	13,247	14,524
Other taxation and social security	4,097	7,430
Other creditors	1,171	738
Accruals & deferred income	50,250	136,498
	68,765	159,190

13 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds				
General				
General	124,225	172,910	(232,874)	64,261
Designated				
Festival & Vital Spark	-	16,055	(16,055)	-
Welfare & contingency	60,000	-	-	60,000
	60,000	16,055	(16,055)	60,000
Total unrestricted funds	184,225	188,965	(248,929)	124,261
Restricted funds				
Early Years	1,340	107,150	(108,490)	-
Vital Spark	1,250	8,508	(9,758)	-
Library Projects	-	110,237	(101,312)	8,925
The City Classroom	10,158	42,247	(32,644)	19,761
Festival	8,455	58,716	(67,171)	-
Spark Plus	9,014	36,969	(45,983)	-
Total restricted funds	30,217	363,827	(365,358)	28,686
Total funds	214,442	552,792	(614,287)	152,947

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

Festival Projects Fund:
Funds contributing to the delivery of a one-week children's arts Festival of cultural engagement in performing and combined arts in February, including linked school and community projects delivered in the Autumn and Spring. Funded by grants from Leicester City Council, Foyle Foundation, Scop Arts, the Lord Mayor's Charity, Edith Murphy Foundation, Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation and other small Trusts and Foundations. This also included the Braunstone Beats project funded by Youth Music and Leicestershire Music.

Spark Plus Fund:
Funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to Explore and Test the impact of the festival shows on schools through curriculum links, learning improvement and teacher skill development, this was the final year of the project, concluded summer 2022.

The City Classroom Fund:
The City Classroom is a strategic cultural education partnership led and managed by The Spark and funded by The Mighty Creatives / Arts Council England. The partnership promotes, coordinates and advocates for cultural education and children and young people's creativity across Leicester and Leicestershire. Coordination of the partnership will be handed over to University of Leicester in April 2023. Therefore remaining funds are held as restricted funds, to handover for planned activity delivered after April.

Early Years Fund:
Funded by the Leicester City Council, Small Wonders is a project in two libraries in Leicester, with artists in residence working with children 0-7 and their families, and included an expansion of the work to two new libraries, and summer booster sessions funded by Children in Need. This project finished in summer 2022.

The other Early Years project is Music Champions, funded by Youth Music and partner organisations, to develop a new Early Years Music network: supporting musicians and early years practitioners; and promoting the role music plays in the development of children aged 0-4 years. This project also finished in summer 2022.

The Spark was successful in receiving funding from Youth Music for a new project of Music Champions, with support from partners Leicestershire Music and Leicester City Council Early Help. This was started in March 2023 and runs until 2025.

Library Fund:
The Spark leads a consortium of five East Midlands Library Services to deliver the Among Ideal Friends programme, funded by Arts Council England Strategic Funding and with participating county and city local authorities contributing funds. Launched in 2016, the aim is to create and establish a range of high quality book and story based performances and workshops for children aged 5-11 years and their families and schools, shared across 55 libraries. Additionally, the Spark was commissioned by Inspire - Culture, Learning, Libraries, to programme work for children and families into other libraries in Nottinghamshire.

Vital Spark Fund:
Vital Spark is a programme and approach which aims to address the gap of diverse led work in the children's performance sector through an artist development programme, ideas fund and the commissioning of new work, and a national partners network. Funds were received from Unlimited to support their artists accessing the Festival Delegate programme, and from partner venues supporting specific artist development.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General	124,225	-	-	-	124,225
Designated					
Welfare & contingency	60,000	-	-	-	60,000
Total unrestricted funds	184,225	-	-	-	184,225
Restricted					
Early Years	-	108,231	(109,891)	3,000	1,340
Vital Spark	(500)	7,750	(6,500)	500	1,250
Library Projects	500	78,967	(78,967)	(500)	-
The City Classroom	-	46,180	(33,022)	(3,000)	10,158
Festival	-	81,497	(77,042)	4,000	8,455
Spark Plus	-	35,302	(22,288)	(4,000)	9,014
General	-	26,019	(26,019)	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	383,946	(353,729)	-	30,217
Total funds	184,225	383,946	(353,729)	-	214,442

14 Fees payable to independent examiner

During the period, the fees payable (excluding VAT) to the charity's independent examiner Community Accounting Plus (previously L&S Accountancy services) are analysed as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Independent examination	1,250	2,500
	1,250	2,500

15 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

16 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

THE SPARK ARTS FOR CHILDREN

England & Wales - Charity number 1106952

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 5254229 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1106952

Report of the Trustees and

Financial Statements For The Year Ended 31st March 2022

for

The Spark Arts for Children

Dale Accounting Services Limited
64 High Street
Belper
Derbyshire
DE56 1GF

The Spark Arts for Children

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For The Year Ended 31st March 2022

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The Spark Arts for Children

Report of the Trustees
For The Year Ended 31st March 2022

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2022. The trustees have adopted 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) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The charity's objects per the Articles of Association are as follows:
To advance the education and development of children and young people in Leicester, Leicestershire and beyond through a range of activities, including the organisation and promotion of an annual arts festival, consisting of workshops and productions of dance, theatre and other performing arts; presented in theatres, community venues and schools.

Our values and vision
Our values underpin everything we do. Our published values are as follows:

- A fair and safe environment where everyone is valued
- The space for big ideas to grow
- We are curious and love learning
- Empowering children and young people to be amazing

Our vision - extraordinary experiences for children, sparking creativity and change - is at the heart of our values. We collaborate to deliver an annual world-class children's arts festival and year-round cultural work in local communities. We support the creativity of children, families, artists and educators; growing together to present the most exciting ideas, productions and cultural programmes in Leicester, Leicestershire, the East Midlands and beyond.

Since 2004, The Spark has played an important role in developing, restoring and maintaining Leicester's and Leicestershire's cultural identity, encouraging children's creative potential in nurseries, schools, playgrounds and homes, libraries, museums, theatres and art centres. We promote children's cultural values and communities through strong partnerships, creative practices and innovation.

A key strength is how we support artist at different stages in their careers and practices. Conceived in 2018, Vital Spark is a movement that addresses the lack of diversity in live and digital performance for young audiences. We provide professional development opportunities and co-commission and produce new work, supporting artists who are underrepresented in the creative and cultural industries. In turn, these artists support us in our capacity to be a more inclusive and accessible organisation.

Our ambition is for our work to be as thought-provoking as it is playful, and for our organisation to be as creative as our festival and cultural programmes are. Our goal is to change as children's communities change and to continue to be relevant to all children.

Strategic objectives

Our published strategic objectives are as follows:

- Commission and produce a high quality and diverse cultural programme for children in cultural venues, schools and libraries, enabling children, their families and their communities to experience the richness of the arts.
- Deliver the best children's arts festival in the world, recognised nationally and connected internationally for the ambition and innovation of the programme, and valued for its contribution to the quality of life for children.
- Champion arts-based learning and teaching for creativity, collaborating to ensure children locally access and influence arts and cultural opportunities, no matter where they start in life, as their right to creativity and play.
- Grow an entrepreneurial culture, build creativity in strategy and establish a sustainable organisation, ensuring diverse cultural leadership and dynamic governance, skilled, effective and ready to respond to a constantly changing future.

Our outcomes

Our values and strategies are strongly aligned with Arts Council England's Investment Principles and Outcomes long term. We deliver Creative People, Cultural Communities and A Creative and Cultural Country outcomes, principally:

- Providing high-quality early years activities that reach families from a wider range of backgrounds
- Widening and improving opportunities for children and young people to take part in creative activities inside schools
- Widening and improving opportunities for children and young people to take part in creative activities outside schools
- Supporting children and young people to develop their creative skills and potential
- Improving access to a full range of cultural opportunities wherever people live
- Supporting new types of creative practice, new forms of cultural content and new ways of reaching new and existing audiences and participants
- Ensuring people have opportunities to sustain their careers and fulfil their potential in the creative industries, especially those who are currently under-represented

Significant activities

Achievements and performance

The year 2021-22 continued to be untypical; our operations, annual festival and year-round cultural programming affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the amount of work delivered was similar to that delivered in 2019-20, engagement in comparison was lower for both total audiences and children's formal and informal learning and participation. However, this presented opportunities to explore and test new ideas, refine our creative processes and engage at deeper levels with children in schools and families in communities. The hyper-local nature of our work has amplified social creativity and community connectivity.

Progress and achievements are monitored and evaluated, and impact is measured, with data collected through a mixed methods approach on a programme and project basis. Theory of change thinking and planning in 2021 is starting to show a more strategic, efficient and realistic approach to evaluation, where quantitative and qualitative data is used in planning, communications, continuous learning, and regular reporting.

Our artistic and participatory work

After nine festivals and nearly a decade, Adel Al-Salloum left The Spark in October 2021. As we look to the start of a new decade and our 20th festival in 2023, we welcome our new Artistic Director Christopher Gorry in July 2022.

Following the necessary delivery of our first digital Spark Festival in 2021, we continued to deliver core activity. We have supported: artists developing new practice; young children and families discovering artists; play and creativity in early years settings; families accessing theatre in libraries where they live; and children building creative skills and potential, empowered in and out of school through learning and engagement and co-creation.

Our headlines for 2021-22 are presented below, starting with a data snapshot and followed by a handful of highlights to demonstrate how our work is reaching new audiences.

Employed 51 artists (compared to 43 in 2019-20)
Promoted 17 productions (compared to 22 in 2019-20)
Programmed 228 performances (compared to 210 in 2019-20)
Engaging 14,688 audiences (compared to 19,138 in 2019-20)
And 11,799 children and families actively participating (compared to 10,015 in 2019-20)

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Experiencing the extraordinary

From 7 to 13 February, we delivered Spark Festival 2022 in person including an additional digital offer shaped by the success of the first fully digital festival in 2021. The team worked with incredible creativity and resilience in the face of uncertainty and change, collaborating with partners, companies, artists and communities to deliver a festival that reached new audiences while building deeper relationships with current audiences. Over 7 days we promoted 10 productions, delivering 70 performances and 74 events across 15 venues. We worked with 13 companies, supported 69 artists, involved 19 schools, and engaged 5,100 children in schools and 10.5k audiences live.

1,020 children and families saw a show or participated in free family events in their local library, and 940 children and families watched digital performances on demand in schools and homes, with the augmented reality trail Blaze in partnership with Phoenix extending our digital audiences.

Bursting with theatre, music, dance and visual and digital, the festival theme encouraged children and adults to find the extraordinary in the ordinary. And the festival provided a platform for children's voice and agency (see Festival Takeovers below) demonstrating an ongoing need for more co-creation to reach more children inside and outside schools, making visible the creativity and capabilities of all children visible in schools and cultural venues.

Building a diverse workforce

Since 2018, 42 artists have engaged in the Vital Spark programme: in development (e.g. go-sees, masterclasses, networking events); with investment in ideas (e.g. ideas fund, fundraising support, R&D, providing and brokering specialist guidance, mentoring); producing full commissions (partnership development, co-commissioning investment); and Seat at the Table events (Code of Care development and peer to peer learning). In 2021-22, artists Glenys Xavier, Ashok Mistry and Sean Burn shared their artistic journey at the Seat at the Table event during the festival.

We collaborate to make sure new diverse-led work commissioned through development and investment is produced to a high-quality for presentation at Spark Festival 2022 before going on national tour. In 2021-22 we worked with Leicester-based Aakash Odedra Company presenting *Little Murmur* for children aged 7 years and over in libraries and schools, Takeshi Matsumoto (Little Big Dance) presenting *Club Origami* in libraries for 0-5 year-olds, and Mellow Baku presenting *Mmm Ahh Whoosh* for children and families at Attenborough Arts Centre.

Through funding from Youth Music, Year 2 of our Music Champions project saw 6 pairs of musicians and Early Years practitioners develop their skills and knowledge of early years practice and the benefits of music engagement with the very young, through bespoke training and shared delivery in schools, libraries, nurseries and children's centres.

A child's right to play

Since 2020 we have been working in partnership with Leicester City Council's Neighbourhoods Service to deliver **Small Wonders**, a storytelling, music and creative play programme for young children and their parents/carers. We have shown that audience engagement through artists in residence in libraries, nurseries and schools works.

Since October 2021 we have delivered 110 sessions in nurseries, schools and libraries (57% in Eyres Monsell and 43% in North Evington) resulting in 1,787 engagements with children aged 0-5 years, 67% in settings in Eyres Monsell and 33% in settings in North Evington. In total 2,461 children and adults have taken part to date, demonstrating more outreach in nurseries and schools results in higher levels of regular attendance in libraries, indicating good growth potential.

At Pork Pie Library where pre-pandemic engagement was extremely low, we demonstrated a significant increase driven largely by word of mouth and key relationships with early years providers. Preschool Managers in Eyres Monsell said that "The impact it has had on the development of the prime areas of our preschool children has been significant" and "It had shown marked improvements in children's personal, social, and emotional development, and communication and language. Children that have been identified with additional needs have flourished in the sensory experience and freedom of opportunity".

Small Wonders supports exceptional creative pedagogy and practice showing significant opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and training, particularly for artists new to the industry or work in early years.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

A child's right to creativity

With investment from Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Foyle Foundation and Scop Arts, **SparkPlus** now delivers three strands: Festival+ digital resources for schools booking a live performance; supporting Creativity Councils in 4 creative SparkPlus schools; Festival Takeovers in city centre cultural venues, where artists enable children to programme, market and evaluate cultural activity for young audiences and their families, supported by our unique Unpacking the Arts training.

Refining our co-creation approach, we have been working with Ash Field Academy, Falcons Primary School, Mayflower Primary School and Mellor Community Primary School, consulting children and teachers and co-producing creative and cultural activities that increase creativity in the classroom and engage new audiences in cultural activity outside of schools in cultural venues.

Festival Takeovers support children's creative potential and showcase their cultural value. Working in partnership with four schools - Ash Field Academy, Falcons Primary School, Mayflower Primary School and Mellor Community Primary School - we trained children in creative and critical thinking skills and collaborated with artists in residence and creative practitioners to plan and present Festival Family days, to takeover Curve Theatre and Leicester Museum and Art Gallery.

Children have helped us reach new audiences; 849 people attended the Curve Theatre takeover and 1,211 at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. Empowering children through industry level experiences outside of school has strong potential for future festivals, reflected in a peer review of the festival: "I applaud and was captivated with the idea of children taking over spaces. [...] I do think it is worth pursuing as children had clearly enjoyed being there."

A summer season of wellbeing

In June 2021, Upswing, a leading contemporary circus company, and The Spark presented **Seasons**, a live family theatre production for children aged 5+. Two acrobats explore nature by digging, climbing and balancing in a sensory environment producing a joyful and immersive experience for children and their families. We delivered 28 performances to 315 audience members across 20 libraries and 5 local authority areas, our **Among Ideal Friends** partnership. 84% people said the quality of the event was 'very good' with 100% people saying the whole experience was 'very good' (80%) or 'good' (20%).

The majority (82%) of people who visited a show are from medium or lower/low cultural engagement groups, sparking curiosity within children and their families in their communities. One parent said: "This was our first event at a library since the Covid lockdown in March 2020 and it was a welcome return to the normality. We are thrilled with the efforts of The Spark and it was nice to be able to enjoy this with my child." Another exclaimed: "It's out of my expectation to watch a performance in the library. My daughter and I enjoyed the show very much. We look forward to upcoming shows" indicating how live performance in local libraries creates an original and unexpected atmosphere of music and movement creating great family engagement.

Fun Café

In summer 2021 The Spark led on **The Fun Café**, commission by Leicester City Council as part of "Summer in the City". The Fun Café popped up in Highcross shopping centre, transforming an empty shop and providing visitors and passers-by with enjoyable experience of storytelling, music and crafts. More than 1,500 people took part (860 children and young people) with 64% participants coming specifically for the event, plus enjoying food and drink (36%) and visiting other attractions (23%) whilst visiting Leicester, increasing footfall on the high street and helping to drive economic growth.

Visitors came to take part in creative and cultural activity demonstrating how a creative, safe and accessible space can support wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Organisational changes
The Director of the Spark Arts for Children, Adel Al-Salloum left the organisation in October 2021. One of the Trustees, Karen Birch, stepped down from the board to take on the temporary role of Interim Executive Director, managing the organisation and the transition to new leadership.

As part of an on-going organisational review, the trustees decided to move forward with a new leadership structure of Artistic Director and Executive Director. The post of Artistic Director was therefore advertised at the latter end of 21-22, and recruitment was complete by April. It is expected to proceed with the recruitment of the Executive Director in autumn 2022.

Funding
The Spark Arts for Children receives National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding from Arts Council England, confirmed for the period 2018 - 2023. During this year, an application was submitted to continue as an NPO for the next funding round 2023-2026, the outcome of this being known in October 2022.

The Spark continues to receive the majority of its income from projects grants from Trusts & Foundations and Local Authorities across the breadth of our work in libraries, schools and communities, including revenue funding from Leicester City Council for our annual festival.

During the year the charity also received welcome support from corporate partners and individual donors and these continue to be an important component of income generation.

Public benefit
In summary, the main activities The Spark Arts for Children delivers throughout the year for public benefit is a range of activities including performing arts, visual arts and digital arts presentations, productions and participation workshops and events. Because these activities take place in schools, libraries, theatres, arts centres, museums, outdoors and online, we help to advance children's learning and development, delivering socio-economic, cultural and education outcomes for children in Leicester, Leicestershire and the East Midlands.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

STRATEGIC REPORT

Financial position

At the end of the 2020-21 year, the long term projects (more than one year) had been reduced in activity or postponed, due to the pandemic. Therefore, with the agreement of funding partners, the company was carrying deferred restricted funds of £226,763 for delivery in 2021-22, and a further £91,985 in allocated funds for Vital Spark commissions and The City Classroom delivery. Although most activity was able to continue, the scope continued to be reduced, i.e. by venue capacity, low audience engagement or reduction of touring product for young audiences. As a result, some projects were not all able to be completed, so again with agreement of funding partners some activity has been deferred to 2022-23.

Of the deferred funds, £194,057 was applied in year. This accounts for the increase in income compared to 2020-21.

Expenditure on project activity therefore has increased proportionally to the increased project delivery funds.

Reserves policy

The purpose of the Reserves Policy is to ensure the stability of the mission, employment, programmes and ongoing operations of the organisation and to provide a source of internal funds for organisational priorities such as programme opportunity and capacity and skills building. The Reserves Policy is implemented alongside other governance and financial policies, aligned to make sure policies and strategies are joined up to provide the structure, systems and practices to deliver our strategic goals and operational plans.

Reserves are planned to provide an internal source of funds for situations such as a sudden increase in expenses, one-time unbudgeted expenses, unanticipated loss in funding, or uninsured losses.

Reserves are also intended to provide an internal source of funds where the company permanently ceases charitable activities and must close operations.

Our reserves are used to demonstrate and build resilience. As such, they serve a dynamic role and are regularly reviewed and adjusted in response to both internal and external changes.

The minimum target for reserves to be held is currently established as an amount sufficient to maintain ongoing operations and programmes measured for a set period of three months.

Providing guidance for strategic and financial planning for the transition to a new leadership team in 2022 and the planning and submission of our application to Arts Council for 2023-2026 investment, the Operating Reserves and Contingency and Welfare Reserves have now been consolidated.

At 31 March 2022 unrestricted reserves were £184,225. Our current reserves target is £60,000.

Currently the trustees have identified that these reserves will be reduced to sustain the organisation through the operational staff changes required in 2022 -24. Therefore we anticipate that we will retain a small reserve at the end of 23/24.

Two key strategies agreed to maintain the reserves are first, to raise the necessary funds in a timely way, and second, to diversify our funding base. These will now be implemented to sustain the reserves over 4 years (2022-2026) at £60,000 plus an average £10k operational reserves per year for innovation and growth.

Reviewing and reporting on the Reserves Policy

The Reserves Policy is regularly reviewed by the leadership team and reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Board of Trustees to make sure we aren't setting aside too much or too little.

We will use our trustees' annual report to tell donors, funders and other stakeholders:

- why we need to keep money aside instead of spending it on our charity's aims
- how much we hold in reserve
- why we need to hold this amount in reserve
- what our reserves can be spent on

Reserves are recorded in the financial records as Unrestricted General Funds. The Funds will be funded and available in cash or cash equivalent funds.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

To help deliver its public benefit, the charity aims to have an overall balance of skills, aptitude and representation within its Trustees.

The charity maintains a Board of a minimum 8 and maximum 12 trustees. Regular skills audits are undertaken by the Chair, and further recruitment is undertaken where areas are felt to be under represented.

An equalities survey is undertaken yearly and any recruitment aims for a balance across gender, ethnicity and disability.

The charity aims to have one "young" Trustee aged between 18-24.

One third (or the number nearest one third) of the Trustees must retire at each AGM, and may be re-elected.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

5254229 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number

1106952

Registered office

LCB Depot
31 Rutland Street
Leicester
Leicestershire
LE1 1RE

Trustees

M Reza
V Mistry
M E Candler
A Sharma (resigned 1.10.21)
J Mann
J Prest (resigned 28.7.21)
A Parmar
K Birch (resigned 28.9.21)
S L M Guthrie
P Bennett (appointed 28.7.22)
R Lee (appointed 1.2.22)

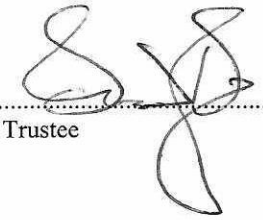
Company Secretary

H J P Roy

Independent Examiner

Nicola Divine FCCA
(employee of L&S Accountancy Services)
64 High Street
Belper
Derbyshire
DE56 1GF

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 15th September 2022 and signed on the board's behalf by:



.....
M Reza - Trustee

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Spark Arts for Children

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Spark Arts for Children ('the Company')
I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31st March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Since your charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a registered member of Dale Accounting Services Limited which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)).

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

N. Divine

Nicola Divine FCCA
(Employee of L&S Accountancy Services)
Independent Examiner
64 High Street
Belper
Derbyshire
DE56 1GF

Date: 15th September 2022

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Financial Activities
For The Year Ended 31st March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	2022 Total funds £	2021 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	269,417	-	269,417	155,476
Charitable activities					
Charity Activities		19,647	315,321	334,968	188,005
Other trading activities	3	32,003	68,625	100,628	32,062
Investment income	4	32	-	32	420
Other income		-	-	-	30,797
Total		321,099	383,946	705,045	406,760
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	6	18,510	-	18,510	18,150
Charitable activities	7				
Charity Activities		58,989	353,729	412,718	174,615
Other		189,575	-	189,575	196,694
Total		267,074	353,729	620,803	389,459
NET INCOME		54,025	30,217	84,242	17,301
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		130,200	-	130,200	112,899
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		184,225	30,217	214,442	130,200

The notes form part of these financial statements

The Spark Arts for Children

Balance Sheet
31st March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	2022 Total funds £	2021 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	13	3,114	-	3,114	3,038
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	14	22,302	-	22,302	20,690
Cash at bank and in hand		193,308	154,908	348,216	441,489
		215,610	154,908	370,518	462,179
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	15	(34,499)	(124,691)	(159,190)	(335,017)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		181,111	30,217	211,328	127,162
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		184,225	30,217	214,442	130,200
NET ASSETS		184,225	30,217	214,442	130,200
FUNDS	16				
Unrestricted funds				184,225	130,200
Restricted funds				30,217	-
TOTAL FUNDS				214,442	130,200

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31st March 2022.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2022 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

(a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and

(b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 15th September 2022 and were signed on its behalf by:

M E Candler - Trustee .....

M Reza - Trustee .....

The notes form part of these financial statements

The Spark Arts for Children

Cash Flow Statement
For The Year Ended 31st March 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	(90,733)	54,182
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities		(90,733)	54,182
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,572)	(2,435)
Interest received		32	420
Net cash used in investing activities		(2,540)	(2,015)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		(93,273)	52,167
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		441,489	389,322
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		348,216	441,489

The notes form part of these financial statements

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Cash Flow Statement
For The Year Ended 31st March 2022

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2022 £	2021 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	84,242	17,301
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	2,496	2,353
Interest received	(32)	(420)
Increase in debtors	(1,612)	(5,323)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(175,827)	40,271
Net cash (used in)/provided by operations	(90,733)	54,182

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.21 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.22 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	441,489	(93,273)	348,216
	441,489	(93,273)	348,216
Total	441,489	(93,273)	348,216

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements
The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, 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)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income
All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure
Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, 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 accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets
Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Plant and machinery	- 20% on cost
Computer equipment	- 33% on cost

Taxation
The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Designated funds can only be used for particular purpose within the objects of the charity. Designations arise when the charity allocates certain funds based on budges for a particular purpose and as specified by the donor.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits
The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

continued...

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2022	2021
	£	£
Donations	7,832	5,780
Core grants	261,585	149,696
	269,417	155,476

3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2022	2021
	£	£
Core activity	28,406	3,061
Sponsorships	4,600	-
Additional activities	67,622	29,001
	100,628	32,062

4. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2022	2021
	£	£
Deposit account interest	32	417
Interest receivable - trading	-	3
	32	420

5. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	2022	2021
		£	£
Core activity	Charity Activities	129,199	65,682
Projects	Charity Activities	205,769	122,323
		334,968	188,005

6. RAISING FUNDS

Raising donations and legacies

	2022	2021
	£	£
Freelance fees and fund raising costs	18,510	18,150

continued...

7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs £
Charity Activities	412,718

8. SUPPORT COSTS

	Management £
Other resources expended	189,575

9. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income / (expenditure) is stated after charging / (crediting):

	2022 £	2021 £
Depreciation - owned assets	2,496	2,353

10. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st March 2022 nor for the year ended 31st March 2021.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31st March 2022 nor for the year ended 31st March 2021.

continued...

11. STAFF COSTS

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	240,487	215,695
Social security costs	13,092	12,597
Other pension costs	4,428	4,226
	258,007	232,518

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2022	2021
Management/administration staff	13	14

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

12. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted fund	Restricted fund	Total funds
	£	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	155,476	-	155,476
Charitable activities			
Charity Activities	4,472	183,533	188,005
Other trading activities	10,713	21,349	32,062
Investment income	420	-	420
Other income	30,797	-	30,797
Total	201,878	204,882	406,760
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	-	18,150	18,150
Charitable activities			
Charity Activities	491	174,124	174,615
Other	184,086	12,608	196,694
Total	184,577	204,882	389,459
NET INCOME	17,301	-	17,301
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	112,899	-	112,899
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	130,200	-	130,200

continued...

13. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
COST			
At 1st April 2021	5,502	9,645	15,147
Additions	-	2,572	2,572
Disposals	-	(2,863)	(2,863)
At 31st March 2022	5,502	9,354	14,856
DEPRECIATION			
At 1st April 2021	4,730	7,379	12,109
Charge for year	406	2,090	2,496
Disposals	-	(2,863)	(2,863)
At 31st March 2022	5,136	6,606	11,742
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31st March 2022	366	2,748	3,114
At 31st March 2021	772	2,266	3,038

14. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	11,064	18,066
Prepayments	11,238	2,624
	22,302	20,690

15. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade creditors	14,526	10,636
Social security and other taxes	7,763	2,490
Other creditors	124,689	319,777
Accrued expenses	12,212	2,114
	159,190	335,017

continued...

16. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

Restricted Funds	Balance B/fwd	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains & Losses	Balance C/fwd
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Festival Project	-	81,497	(77,042)	4,000	-	8,455
SparkPlus	-	35,302	(22,288)	(4,000)	-	9,014
Vital Spark	(500)	7,750	(6,500)	500	-	1,250
The City Classroom	-	46,180	(33,022)	(3,000)	-	10,158
Early Years Project	-	108,231	(109,891)	3,000	-	1,340
Library Project	500	78,967	(78,967)	(500)	-	-
General	-	26,019	(26,019)		-	-
Total	**-**	**383,946**	**(353,729)**	**-**	**-**	**30,217**

Festival Projects Fund
Funds contributing to the delivery of a one-week children's arts Festival of cultural engagement in performing and combined arts in February, including linked school and community projects delivered in the autumn and Spring. Funded by grants from Leicester City Council, Foyle Foundation, Scop Arts, the Lord Mayor's Charity, Edith Murphy Foundation, Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation and other small Trust and Foundations. This also included the Braunstone Beats project funded by Youth Music and Leicestershire Music.

SparkPlus Fund
Funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to explore and test the impact of the festival shows on schools through curriculum links, learning improvement and teacher skill development. This is the final year of the project, concluding summer 2022.

The City Classroom Fund
The City Classroom is a strategic cultural education partnership led and managed by The Spark and funded by The Mighty Creatives / Arts Council England. The partnership promotes, coordinates and advocates for cultural education and children and young people's creativity across Leicester and Leicestershire.

Early Years Fund
Funded by the Leicester City Council, Small Wonders is a project in two libraries in Leicester, with artists in residence working with children 0-7 and their families. Three year funding from Children in Need (2021-24) enabled us to extend the engagement and provide additional summer activity targeted at pre-school readiness post pandemic. The other Early Years project is Music Champions, funded by Youth Music and partner organisations, to develop a new Early Years Music network: supporting musicians and early years practitioners; and promoting the role music plays in the development of children aged 0-4 years.

Library Fund
The Spark leads a consortium of five East Midlands Library Services to deliver the Among Ideal Friends programme, funded by Arts Council England Strategic Funding and with participating county and city local authorities contributing funds. Launched in 2016, the aim is to create and establish a range of high quality book and story based performances and workshops for children aged 5-11 years and their families and schools, shared across 55 libraries. Additionally, The Spark was commissioned by Inspire – Culture, Learning, Libraries, to programme work for children and families into other libraries in Nottinghamshire.

Vital Spark Fund
Vital Spark is a programme and approach which aims to address the gap of diverse led work in the children's performance sector through and artist development programme, ideas fund and the commissioning of new work, and a national partners network. Funds were received from Unlimited to support their artists accessing the Festival Delegate programme, and from partner venues supporting specific artist development.

General Funds
Small project work: funds from Leicester Museums & Galleries to deliver an Arts Award project called Discover Detectives, and from Leicester City Council to deliver family events in the city centre over the summer, and to provide support activity for the Queen's Canopy event.

continued...

Unrestricted Funds	Balance B/fwd	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains & Losses	Balance C/fwd
	£	£	£	£	£	£
General	65,200	206,285	(165,377)	18,117	-	124,225
Festival & Vital Spark	-	114,814	(101,697)	(13,117)		-
Welfare & Contingency (Designated)	65,000	-	-	(5,000)	-	60,000
Total	**130,200**	**321,099**	**(267,074)**	**-**	**-**	**184,225**

17. DEFERRED INCOME MOVEMENTS

Restricted Funds	Balance B/fwd	Income	Recognised in year	Balance C/fwd
	£	£	£	£
Festival Project	5,477	62,529	53,197	14,809
SparkPlus	35,302	-	35,302	-
Vital Spark	1,750	-	1,750	-
The City Classroom	25,994	-	4,800	21,194
Early Years Project	45,461	93,781	98,231	41,011
Library Project	110,019	16,625	78,967	47,677
General	2,760	4,304	7,064	-
Total	**226,763**	**177,239**	**279,311**	**124,691**

Unrestricted Funds (Designated)	Balance B/fwd	Income	Recognised in year	Balance C/fwd
	£	£	£	£
Vital Spark	85,538	-	85,538	-
The City Classroom	6,447	5,933	12,380	-
Total	**91,985**	**5,933**	**97,918**	**-**

Festival Projects Fund
Funds for part two of the Braunstone Beats project deferred for completion in the summer term.

The City Classroom Fund
Due to the pandemic, activity levels continue to be lower than forecast so funds from the Mighty Creatives were deferred for delivery in 2022-23.

Designated funds have been transferred to restricted funds.

Early Years Fund
Small Wonders and Music Champions project funds deferred for completion of the projects in the autumn of 2022.

Library Fund
Among Ideal Friends: Expenditure on live and digital performance during the year was at a lower level due to the on-going effect of the pandemic, limited capacity in libraries and lack of touring product, so funds will be deferred and the programmes extended to autumn 2022.

Inspire: Funds were also deferred for programmes in 2022-23.

continued...

Designated Funds – The City Classroom
Membership income not spent in year is carried forward as designated funds for partnership work.

18. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

During the year, there was a payment of £1,780 (2021 - £1,500) paid to The Underground Creatives for performances and project services. The former Trustee, Akshay Sharma, is also involved with this organisation.

The Spark Arts for Children

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
For The Year Ended 31st March 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	7,832	5,780
Core grants	261,585	149,696
	269,417	155,476
Other trading activities		
Core activity	28,406	3,061
Sponsorships	4,600	-
Additional activities	67,622	29,001
	100,628	32,062
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	32	417
Interest receivable - trading	-	3
	32	420
Charitable activities		
Core activity	129,199	65,682
Projects	205,769	122,323
	334,968	188,005
Other income		
Grants - COVID and HMRC JRS	-	30,797
Total incoming resources	705,045	406,760
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Freelance fees and fund raising costs	18,510	18,150
Charitable activities		
Core activity	175,613	62,583
Projects	131,607	50,745
Direct activity staff costs	105,498	61,287
	412,718	174,615
Support costs		
Management		
Wages	134,990	154,408
Social security	13,092	12,597
Pensions	4,428	4,226
Carried forward	152,510	171,231

The Spark Arts for Children

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
For The Year Ended 31st March 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
Management		
Brought forward	152,510	171,231
Rent and rates	10,542	9,262
Insurance	1,410	1,373
Telephone, post and stationery	1,950	1,399
Training & hospitality	2,991	323
Marketing	3,012	2,611
Sundries	256	215
Accountancy	2,350	2,462
Travelling	1,354	110
Repairs & renewals	1,597	2,664
Recruitment costs	5,230	280
Research & development	3,877	2,411
Plant and machinery	406	778
Computer equipment	2,090	1,575
	189,575	196,694
Total resources expended	620,803	389,459
Net income	84,242	17,301

THE SPARK ARTS FOR CHILDREN

England & Wales - Charity number 1106952

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 5254229 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1106952

Report of the Trustees and

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st March 2021

for

The Spark Arts for Children

Dale Accounting Services Limited
64 High Street
Belper
Derbyshire
DE56 1GF

The Spark Arts for Children

Contents of the Financial Statements
For The Year Ended 31st March 2021

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The Spark Arts for Children

Report of the Trustees
For The Year Ended 31st March 2021

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2021. The trustees have adopted 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) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The charity's objective is to advance education and development of children and young people in Leicester and Leicestershire through the arts.

Our Mission: Extraordinary experiences for children, sparking creativity and change.

We deliver a range of activities throughout the year including performing arts, visual and digital art presentations, productions and workshops, in theatres, community venues and schools. We also organise the Spark Festival in Leicester each year in February.

Significant activities

A Year of Impact and Learning

2020-21 was a year of sudden and unexpected challenges. Leicester's year in lockdown was more difficult than most and it presented us with a year of constant research and development - re-evaluating, adding policies and responding to new challenges.

Throughout the year we listened to artists, children, families, schools and partners and developed our activities to remain purposeful and provide safe hands in a crisis, finding fresh, inventive ways to make a positive difference to children and families.

March 2020 - Lockdown announced - A rapid response

Within 2 weeks of full lockdown we developed and shared our first online video content *Rhythm Play Express* and *Paper Palace*. It was essential to respond quickly to maintain the strong relationships built by Artists in Residence Dave 'Stickman' Higgins at Pork Pie Library & Community Centre and Sophie Cullinan at St Barnabas Library

This online content was supported by creative resource bags and worksheets, distributed to children without internet across the city on behalf of Leicester Children's Centre's staff.

April 2020 - Stories from Home

Vital Spark recognised the importance to hear lockdown stories from voices relevant to and representative of all children with an open commission to produce an original story from underrepresented artists. A team of children and families were part of the commissioning team, helping to select the stories they most wanted to hear. Stories by 8 artists were produced and one of the stories retold in British Sign Language. Printed copies were distributed to families with no online access.

May - Creative Learning Toolkit launched

In response to teachers' needs we created a high-quality creative learning resource that gave children at home, and in the classroom, the opportunity to enjoy high quality, artistic adventures. A companion Arts Award discover logbook was developed with funding from The Mighty Creatives, enabling families to achieve their Discover Arts Award from home. A specially created Facebook support group shared creations and experiences and stayed connected with Spark activities through the year.

June 2020 - Making online Theatre for Library Audiences

Each year The Spark works with its Among Ideal Friends library partners to produce imaginative theatre for families in their communities. When libraries closed it gave us the opportunity to work as a partnership to commission new online content. The Big Veg Takedown was an innovative project, produced with 154 Collective, where artists, children and families all worked together to create an exciting, animated story through digital collaboration.

We also commissioned Theatre Rites to produce two short *Talking Rubbish* videos to inspire children to create puppets from recycled materials.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

June - In The Classroom
Leading Leicester-shires Cultural Education Partnership, The City Classroom, we played a key role in developing the Recovery Curriculum Action-Research Project to learn about the fears, anxieties, and emotional needs of pupils coming out of lockdown and to help us devise suitable materials for Leicester(shire)'s recovery curriculum.

We ran our first online webinar. Aimed at primary school teachers to increase confidence in delivering poetry activities in the classroom. Powerful Poetry had 42 live participants and 41 watch the session 'on-demand', more than could be facilitated at one 'in person' session.

July - A Seat at the Table
The Vital Spark movement held a series of online discussions that gave a platform for freelance artists to share and debate ideas. Engaging with 25 artists over 7 sessions, these conversations led to a range of online CPD training sessions in leadership language, project planning and Grant Applications; and an industry Code of Care document for use between freelancers and those that employ them.

August - Early Years Music Network
The Spark took the lead role in the newly created Leicester/shire Early Years Music Network and were awarded a £95,390 grant from Youth Music, using public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England to promote the role music plays in the development of children aged 0 - 4 years and support musicians and early years practitioners to be 'music champions'.

September - Reclaiming the Space
Between lockdowns, Spark Artists in Residence Dave 'Stickman' Higgins and Sian Watson Taylor created a blueprint to provide creative adventures for children and families in libraries during times of social distancing and show how to embrace the restrictions.

October - Artists at the heart of The Spark
The Spark announced the appointment of Trina Haldar and Daryl Beeton as our new Associate Directors, placing artists at the heart of The Spark's decision-making process, working within the city's schools and communities to nurture and protect the arts for children in a fragile time.

November 2020 - The Girl of Ink and Stars
Looking for new ways to bring exciting and imaginative stories to children during home schooling, The Spark adapted the 2019 theatre production The Girl of Ink and Stars into an audio drama, complete with a comprehensive learning pack with lessons plans and activity sheets. Members of the creative team Zoomed into 14 classrooms for Q&A sessions. These were adapted as videos for schools and families to watch on demand.

January - National lockdown announced - online Festival launched
A year's learning meant we were able to adapt plans for a festival of intimate one-to-one live experiences and events in parks and playgrounds, to programme an ambitious and relevant digital festival just 2 weeks after lockdown was announced. A full festival of 56 'live' online performances, 19 workshops and 7 festival shows to watch on demand was programmed.

February - The Spark Festival
Families turned their homes into festival sites with homemade bunting, indoor festival tents, costumes and displays. Key 'ingredients' for making storytelling stages and creating a sparkling Festival atmosphere at home, were posted through the letterboxes of our families and nursery partners. Live streamed performances and workshops provided audiences with a shared experience and a new type of online activity where people could get together virtually and enjoy being in the same space as other families.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

We were able to develop new national and international audiences. Families from India and Dubai joined local audiences to hear Secret Stories, a project created in the heart of the Belgrave community. A commission to Replay Theatre to produce a digital version of their live sensory theatre show provided neurodivergent audiences with more opportunities to engage than would normally be possible during the festival.

The Spark Festival 2021 created a vibrant and engaged community in a digital world.

The future 2021- 2022
We are, of course, excited at the thoughts of meeting our audiences face to face and heading back into schools and venues across the city for the 2022 Festival. But we are also excited at using the learning from this unique festival and the experiences that have expanded our digital horizons.

The Trustees will continue to meet on a regular basis to evaluate the impact of future COVID-19 restrictions, Government guidelines and local data on our planned activities.

Public benefit
The main activities the Charity delivers throughout the year for public benefit is a range of activities including performing arts, visual and digital art presentations, productions and workshops, in theatres, community venues and schools which all help in advancing education and development of children and young people in Leicester and Leicestershire through the arts.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

The Spark receives National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding from Arts Council England and annual revenue funding from Leicester City Council for our annual festival. We remain extremely grateful for their continued support.

The Spark Arts for Children continues to receive the majority of its income from projects grants across the breadth of our work in libraries, schools and communities. During the year the charity also received welcome support from corporate partners, Trusts & Foundations and individual donors and these continue to be an important component of income generation. Many funders were generous in their support for re-imagination of the projects, and re-scheduling or postponement of some activity to the next year. As a consequence the company has deferred restricted funds of £226,763 and unrestricted funds of £91,985 for completion of these current projects.

Across the year Trustees and senior management met regularly to assess ongoing government advice and evaluate risks. Across 2020-21 we reduced costs where possible to enable us to hold a reserve fund inline our Reserve Policy. We received funding for furlough payments to staff over the year of £20,797, and a Business Support Grant of £10,000.

The organisation can move forward confidently into our next operating year, safeguarding activity to ensure our work with children - those most impacted upon by the pandemic - is purposeful in supporting recovery, wellbeing and growth.

Reserves policy

The purpose of the Reserves Policy for The Sparks Arts is to ensure the stability of the mission, programs, employment, and ongoing operations of the organisation and to provide a source of internal funds for organisational priorities such as program opportunity, and capacity building. The Reserves Policy will be implemented in concert with the other governance and financial policies of The Sparks Arts and is intended to support the goals and strategies contained in these related policies and in strategic and operational plans.

Operating Reserves

Definitions and Goals:

The Operating Reserves are intended to provide an internal source of funds for situations such as a sudden increase in expenses, one-time unbudgeted expenses, unanticipated loss in funding, or uninsured losses.

The Operating Reserves serves a dynamic role and will be reviewed and adjusted in response to both internal and external changes.

The amount of the Operating Reserve Fund target minimum will be calculated each year after approval of the annual budget, reported to the Finance Committee/Board of Directors, and included in the regular financial reports.

The Reserve Funds will be recorded in the financial records as Unrestricted General Funds. The Funds will be funded and available in cash or cash equivalent funds.

The amounts held in Operating Reserves at the year-end total £65,200.

Continency and Welfare Reserve

Definitions and Goals:

The Continency and Welfare Reserves are intended to provide an internal source of funds where the Spark Arts permanently ceases charitable activities and must close operations.

The minimum amount to be designated as Continency and Welfare Reserves will be established in an amount sufficient to maintain ongoing operations and programs measured for a set period of three months. The Continency and Welfare Reserves serves a dynamic role and will be reviewed and adjusted in response to both internal and external changes.

The amount of the Continency and Welfare Reserves Fund target minimum will be calculated each year after approval of the annual budget, reported to the Finance Committee/Board of Directors, and included in the regular financial reports.

The Reserve Funds will be recorded in the financial records as Unrestricted Designated Funds. The Funds will be funded and available in cash or cash equivalent funds.

The amounts held in reserves at the year-end total £65,000.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

To help deliver its public benefit, the charity aims to have an overall balance of skills, aptitude and representation within its Trustees.

The charity maintains a Board of a minimum 8 and maximum 12 trustees. Regular skills audits are undertaken by the Chair, and further recruitment is undertaken where areas are felt to be under represented.

An equalities survey is undertaken yearly and any recruitment aims for a balance across gender, ethnicity and disability.

The charity aims to have one "young" Trustee aged between 18-24.

One third (or the number nearest one third) of the Trustees must retire at each AGM, and may be re-elected.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

5254229 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number

1106952

Registered office

LCB Depot
31 Rutland Street
Leicester
Leicestershire
LE1 1RE

Trustees

M Reza
V Mistry
M E Candler
A Sharma
Mrs J Mann
J Prest
A Parmar
Ms K Birch
Mrs S L M Guthrie

Company Secretary

Ms H J P Roy

Accountants

Dale Accounting Services Limited
64 High Street
Belper
Derbyshire
DE56 1GF

Report of the Trustees
For The Year Ended 31st March 2021

Independent Examiner
Nicola Divine FCCA
Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accounts
64 High Street
Belper
Derbyshire
DE56 1GF

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 28 July 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



.....
M Reza - Trustee

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Spark Arts for Children

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Spark Arts for Children ('the Company')
I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31st March 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Since your charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a registered member of Dale Accounting Services Limited which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)).

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

N. Divine

Nicola Divine FCCA
Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
64 High Street
Belper
Derbyshire
DE56 1GF

Date: 28TH JULY 2021

The Spark Arts for Children

Statement of Financial Activities
For The Year Ended 31st March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Year Ended 31.3.21 Total funds £	Period 1.9.19 to 31.3.20 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		155,476	-	155,476	85,095
Charitable activities					
Charity Activities		4,472	183,533	188,005	212,918
Other trading activities	2	10,713	21,349	32,062	26,329
Investment income	3	420	-	420	647
Other income		30,797	-	30,797	-
Total		201,878	204,882	406,760	324,989
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds		-	18,150	18,150	11,676
Charitable activities					
Charity Activities		491	174,124	174,615	204,519
Other		184,086	12,608	196,694	124,193
Total		184,577	204,882	389,459	340,388
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		17,301	-	17,301	(15,399)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		112,899	-	112,899	128,298
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		130,200	-	130,200	112,899

The notes form part of these financial statements

The Spark Arts for Children

Balance Sheet
31st March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 Total funds £	2020 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	8	3,038	-	3,038	2,956
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	20,690	-	20,690	15,367
Cash at bank and in hand		214,726	226,763	441,489	389,322
		235,416	226,763	462,179	404,689
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	(108,254)	(226,763)	(335,017)	(294,746)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		127,162	-	127,162	109,943
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		130,200	-	130,200	112,899
NET ASSETS		130,200	-	130,200	112,899
FUNDS	11				
Unrestricted funds (General)				65,200	47,899
Unrestricted funds (Designated)				65,000	65,000
TOTAL FUNDS				130,200	112,899

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31st March 2021.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2021 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

(a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and

(b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

The notes form part of these financial statements

continued...

Balance Sheet - continued
31st March 2021

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 28 July 2021 and were signed on its behalf by:



M E Candler - Trustee



.....
M Reza - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements
The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, 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)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Financial reporting standard 102 - reduced disclosure exemptions
The charitable company has taken advantage of the following disclosure exemptions in preparing these financial statements, as permitted by FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland':

- the requirements of Section 7 Statement of Cash Flows.

Income
All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure
Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, 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 accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets
Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Plant and machinery	-	20% on cost
Computer equipment	-	33% on cost

Taxation
The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Designated funds can only be used for particular purpose within the objects of the charity. Designations arise when the charity allocates certain funds based on budgets for a particular purpose and as specified by the donor.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits
The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

continued...

2. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Year Ended 31.3.21	Period 1.9.19 to 31.3.20
	£	£
Core activity	3,061	8,175
Sponsorships	-	4,500
Additional activities	29,001	13,654
	32,062	26,329

3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Year Ended 31.3.21	Period 1.9.19 to 31.3.20
	£	£
Deposit account interest	417	647
Interest receivable - trading	3	-
	420	647

4. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	Year Ended 31.3.21	Period 1.9.19 to 31.3.20
	£	£
Depreciation - owned assets	2,353	1,162
Deficit on disposal of fixed assets	-	271
Independent Examiner fees	-	1,140

5. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st March 2021 nor for the period ended 31st March 2020.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31st March 2021 nor for the period ended 31st March 2020.

continued...

6. STAFF COSTS

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	Year Ended 31.3.21	Period 1.9.19 to 31.3.20
Management/administration staff	14	7

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

7. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (Restated)

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	85,095	-	85,095
Charitable activities			
Charity Activities	1,182	211,736	212,918
Other trading activities	26,329	-	26,329
Investment income	647	-	647
Total	113,253	211,736	324,989
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	11,676	-	11,676
Charitable activities			
Charity Activities	(7,217)	211,736	204,519
Other	124,193	-	124,193
Total	128,652	211,736	340,388
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(15,399)	-	(15,399)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	128,298	-	128,298
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	112,899		112,899

continued...

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery	Computer equipment	Totals
	£	£	£
COST			
At 1st April 2020	5,502	7,210	12,712
Additions	-	2,435	2,435
At 31st March 2021	5,502	9,645	15,147
DEPRECIATION			
At 1st April 2020	3,952	5,804	9,756
Charge for year	778	1,575	2,353
At 31st March 2021	4,730	7,379	12,109
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31st March 2021	772	2,266	3,038
At 31st March 2020	1,550	1,406	2,956

9. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade debtors	18,066	12,828
Prepayments	2,624	2,539
	20,690	15,367

10. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	10,636	9,219
Social security and other taxes	2,490	1,865
Other creditors	1,029	-
Deferred income	318,748	282,204
Accrued expenses	2,114	1,458
	335,017	294,746

11. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

Restricted Funds	Balance B/fwd	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains & Losses	Balance C/fwd
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Festival Project	-	29,352	(29,352)		-	-
SparkPlus	-	14,858	(14,858)		-	-
Vital Spark	-	17,000	(17,500)		-	(500)
The City Classroom	-	12,601	(9,601)	(3,000)	-	-
Early Years Project	-	73,929	(76,929)	3,000	-	-
Library Project	-	53,872	(53,372)		-	500
General	-	3,270	(3,270)		-	-
Total	**-**	**204,882**	**(204,882)**	**-**	**-**	**-**

continued...

11. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS Continued...

Festival Projects Fund
Funds contributing to the delivery of one-week children's arts Festival of digital and outdoor cultural engagement in performing and combined arts in February, including linked school and community projects delivered in the Autumn. Funded by grants from Leicester City Council, various Trusts and Foundations and funds from the National Lottery Heritage Fund through The Y Heritage Kick the Dust project.

SparkPlus Fund
Funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to explore and test the impact of the festival shows on schools through curriculum links, learning improvement and teacher skill development. Also supported by 29 May 1961 Foundation.

The City Classroom Fund
The City Classroom is a strategic cultural education partnership led and managed by The Spark and funded by The Mighty Creatives / Arts Council England. The partnership promotes, coordinates and advocates for cultural education and children and young people's creativity across Leicester and Leicestershire. In addition, in 2020-21 The City Classroom received funds from pathways, the Uni Connect Outreach Hub funded by the Office for Students and delivered in collaboration by the University of Leicester, The University of Loughborough, De Montfort University and Leicester College. These funds were for a programme of work creating and delivering a recovery curriculum for schools returning after the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Early Years Fund
Funded by the Leicester City Council, Small Wonders is a project in two libraries in Leicester, with artists in residence working with children 0-7 and their families. The other Early Years project is funded by Youth Music and partner organisations, to develop a new Early Years Music network, supporting musicians and early years practitioners, and promoting the role music plays in the development of children aged 0-4 years.

Library Fund
The Spark leads a consortium of five East Midlands Library Services to deliver the Among Ideal Friends programme, funded by Arts Council England Strategic Funding and with participating county and city local authorities contributing funds. Launched in 2016, the aim is to create and establish a range of high quality book and story based performances and workshops for children aged 5-11 years and their families and schools, shared across 55 libraries. Additionally, The Spark was commissioned by Inspire – Culture, Learning, Libraries, to programme work for children and families into other libraries in Nottinghamshire.

Vital Spark Fund
Vital Spark is a programme and approach which aims to address the gap of diverse led work in the children's performance sector through and artist development programme, ideas fund and the commissioning of new work, and a national partners network. Funding from the Foyle Foundation to support artist development and the artist commission programme was deferred from 2019-20 due to the pandemic.

General Funds
Small project work: funds from Leicester Museums & Galleries to deliver an Arts Award project called Discover Detectives.

Unrestricted Funds	Balance B/fwd	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains & Losses	Balance C/fwd
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Festival General	-	6,833	(15,854)	9,021	-	-
General	47,899	195,045	(168,723)	(9,021)	-	65,200
Welfare & Contingency (Designated)	65,000	-	-	-	-	65,000
Total	**112,899**	**201,878**	**(184,577)**	**-**	**-**	**130,200**

continued...

12. DEFERRED INCOME MOVEMENTS

Restricted Funds	Balance B/fwd	Income	Recognised in year	Balance C/fwd
	£	£	£	£
Festival Project	800	7,000	(2,323)	5,477
SparkPlus	48,160	-	(12,858)	35,302
Vital Spark	17,000	1,750	(17,000)	1,750
The City Classroom	6,695	31,900	(12,601)	25,994
Early Years Project	23,550	88,340	(66,429)	45,461
Library Project	120,366	16,625	(26,972)	110,019
General	-	6,030	(3,270)	2,760
Total	**216,571**	**151,645**	**(141,453)**	**226,763**

Unrestricted Funds (Designated)	Balance B/fwd	Income	Recognised in year	Balance C/fwd
	£	£	£	£
Vital Spark	59,187	48,500	(22,149)	85,538
The City Classroom	6,447	-	-	6,447
Total	**65,634**	**48,500**	**(22,149)**	**91,985**

Festival Projects Fund
Income for various Festival projects deferred for completion in the summer term.

SparkPlus Fund
PHF funding deferred income for year two of the project from original payment in year 1. However due to the pandemic, delivery was not possible at the expected level, so with agreement of the funder, funds continue to be deferred to continue the project in 2021-22

Early Years Fund
The Small Wonders project was suspended by Leicester City Council in May due to temporary library closures during lockdown, and the project extended so part of the LCC grant and a grant from local ward funding deferred for delivery in Summer 2021. Music Champions delivery in settings was delayed until Summer term, so funds were deferred for later delivery.

Library Fund
Expenditure on live and digital performance during the year was at a lower level due to the pandemic, closure of libraries and lack of touring product, so funds will be deferred and the programmes extended to Summer 2022.

General Fund
Delivery of Discovery Detectives extended into 2021-22

13. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

During the year, there was a payment of £1,500 (2020 - £3,650) paid to The Underground Creatives for performing at the Spark Festival 2021. The Trustee, Akshay Sharma, is also involved with this organisation.

The Spark Arts for Children

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
For The Year Ended 31st March 2021

	Year Ended 31.3.21 £	Period 1.9.19 to 31.3.20 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	5,780	6,243
Core grants	149,696	78,852
	155,476	85,095
Other trading activities		
Core activity	3,061	8,175
Sponsorships	-	4,500
Additional activities	29,001	13,654
	32,062	26,329
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	417	647
Interest receivable - trading	3	-
	420	647
Charitable activities		
Core activity	65,682	66,831
Projects	122,323	146,087
	188,005	212,918
Other income		
Grants - COVID and HMRC JRS	30,797	-
Total incoming resources	406,760	324,989
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Freelance fees and fund raising costs	18,150	11,676
Charitable activities		
Core activity	62,583	84,550
Projects	50,745	79,295
Direct activity staff costs	61,287	52,224
	174,615	216,069
Support costs		
Management		
Wages	154,408	76,114
Carried forward	154,408	76,114

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The Spark Arts for Children

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
For The Year Ended 31st March 2021

	Year Ended 31.3.21 £	Period 1.9.19 to 31.3.20 £
Management		
Brought forward	154,408	76,114
Social security	12,597	8,293
Pensions	4,226	2,379
Rent and rates	9,262	5,564
Insurance	1,373	841
Telephone, post and stationery	1,399	1,780
Training & hospitality	603	2,570
Marketing	2,611	4,937
Sundries	215	76
Accountancy	2,462	1,140
Travelling	110	3,111
Repairs & renewals	2,664	466
Research & development	2,411	3,922
Plant and machinery	778	454
Computer equipment	1,575	709
	196,694	112,356
Finance		
Bank charges	-	16
Other		
Loss on sale of tangible fixed assets	-	271
Total resources expended	389,459	340,388
Net income/(expenditure)	17,301	(15,399)

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