

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.

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

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).

The Spark Arts for Children

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 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.

The Spark Arts for Children

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.

The Spark Arts for Children

Trustees' Report

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.

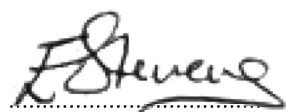
Independent examiner's statement

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		<u>221,744</u>	<u>311,861</u>	<u>533,605</u>	<u>447,004</u>
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	6	<u>(140,755)</u>	<u>(235,203)</u>	<u>(375,958)</u>	<u>(432,173)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(140,755)</u>	<u>(235,203)</u>	<u>(375,958)</u>	<u>(432,173)</u>
Net income		<u>80,989</u>	<u>76,658</u>	<u>157,647</u>	<u>14,831</u>
Net movement in funds		80,989	76,658	157,647	14,831
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		<u>38,777</u>	<u>129,001</u>	<u>167,778</u>	<u>152,947</u>
Total funds carried forward	13	<u>119,766</u>	<u>205,659</u>	<u>325,425</u>	<u>167,778</u>

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

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		<u>193,693</u>	<u>253,311</u>	<u>447,004</u>
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	6	<u>(279,177)</u>	<u>(152,996)</u>	<u>(432,173)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(279,177)</u>	<u>(152,996)</u>	<u>(432,173)</u>
Net (expenditure)/income		<u>(85,484)</u>	<u>100,315</u>	<u>14,831</u>
Net movement in funds		(85,484)	100,315	14,831
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		<u>124,261</u>	<u>28,686</u>	<u>152,947</u>
Total funds carried forward	13	<u><u>38,777</u></u>	<u><u>129,001</u></u>	<u><u>167,778</u></u>

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
		<u>337,752</u>	<u>214,677</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	<u>(13,168)</u>	<u>(49,680)</u>
Net current assets		<u>324,584</u>	<u>164,997</u>
Net assets		<u>325,425</u>	<u>167,778</u>
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	13	205,659	129,001
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		<u>119,766</u>	<u>38,777</u>
Total funds	13	<u>325,425</u>	<u>167,778</u>


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

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	<u>(2,054)</u>	<u>(1,619)</u>
		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	<u>(14,641)</u>	<u>19,641</u>
Net cash flows from operating activities		<u>143,180</u>	<u>(20,215)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	2,054	1,619
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	9	<u>-</u>	<u>(2,498)</u>
Net cash flows from investing activities		<u>2,054</u>	<u>(879)</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		145,234	(21,094)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		<u>190,703</u>	<u>211,797</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		<u><u>335,937</u></u>	<u><u>190,703</u></u>
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds			
Increase/(decrease) in cash		145,234	(21,094)
Net funds at 1 April 2024		<u>190,703</u>	<u>211,797</u>
Net funds at 31 March 2025		<u><u>335,937</u></u>	<u><u>190,703</u></u>

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

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

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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.

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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.

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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
	<u>188,887</u>	<u>188,887</u>	<u>176,634</u>

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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
	<u>30,803</u>	<u>311,861</u>	<u>342,664</u>	<u>268,751</u>

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
	<u>188,887</u>	<u>301,861</u>	<u>490,748</u>

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
	<u>2,054</u>	<u>2,054</u>	<u>1,619</u>

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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
	<u>140,755</u>	<u>235,203</u>	<u>375,958</u>	<u>432,173</u>

7 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2025 £	2024 £
Depreciation of fixed assets	<u>1,940</u>	<u>2,332</u>

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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	-
	<u>187,686</u>	<u>210,098</u>

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	<u>7</u>	<u>13</u>

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).

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

13 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted funds					
<i>General</i>					
General	-	221,744	(140,755)	(30,000)	50,989
<i>Designated</i>					
Contingency & Welfare	38,777	-	-	30,000	68,777
Total unrestricted funds	<u>38,777</u>	<u>221,744</u>	<u>(140,755)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>119,766</u>
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	<u>129,001</u>	<u>311,861</u>	<u>(235,203)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>205,659</u>
Total funds	<u>167,778</u>	<u>533,605</u>	<u>(375,958)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>325,425</u>

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.

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
<i>General</i>					
General	64,261	178,634	(238,836)	(4,059)	-
<i>Designated</i>					
Vital Spark - Artists	-	443	(17,147)	16,704	-
Contingency & Welfare	60,000	-	-	(21,223)	38,777
Festival	-	14,616	(23,194)	8,578	-
	<u>60,000</u>	<u>15,059</u>	<u>(40,341)</u>	<u>4,059</u>	<u>38,777</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>124,261</u>	<u>193,693</u>	<u>(279,177)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>38,777</u>
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
	<u>28,686</u>	<u>253,311</u>	<u>(152,996)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>129,001</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>28,686</u>	<u>253,311</u>	<u>(152,996)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>129,001</u>
Total funds	<u>152,947</u>	<u>447,004</u>	<u>(432,173)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>167,778</u>

14 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted			2025 Total funds
	General £	Designated £	Restricted £	£
Tangible fixed assets	841	-	-	841
Current assets	57,816	68,777	211,159	337,752
Current liabilities	<u>(9,843)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(3,325)</u>	<u>(13,168)</u>
Total net assets	<u>48,814</u>	<u>68,777</u>	<u>207,834</u>	<u>325,425</u>
	Unrestricted			2024 Total funds
	General £	Designated £	Restricted £	£
Tangible fixed assets	2,781	-	-	2,781
Current assets	46,899	38,777	129,001	214,677
Current liabilities	<u>(49,680)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(49,680)</u>
Total net assets	<u>-</u>	<u>38,777</u>	<u>129,001</u>	<u>167,778</u>

The Spark Arts for Children

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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
	<u>1,435</u>	<u>1,380</u>

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.