

THE LINKING NETWORK
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Charity Registration No. 1163901



THE LINKING NETWORK

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Bishop Toby Howarth	
	Rev Denise Poole	
	Wahida Shaffi	
	Yvette Thomas	(Appointed 17 June 2021)
	Ameerah Turner-Desai	(Appointed 17 June 2021)
	Zahra Niazi	(Appointed 1 September 2022)
	Zoe Mawson	(Resigned 31 August 2022)
Charity number	1163901	
Principal address	Margaret McMillan Tower Princes Way Bradford BD1 1NN	
Independent examiner	Naylor Wintersgill Limited Carlton House Grammar School Street Bradford BD1 4NS	
Bankers	CCLA Investment Management 85 Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 4ET	
	Unity Trust Bank Brindley Place Birmingham B1 2HB	

THE LINKING NETWORK

CONTENTS

	Page
Trustees' report	1 - 20
Independent examiner's report	21
Statement of financial activities	22
Balance sheet	23
Statement of cash flows	24
Notes to the financial statements	25 - 38

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's constitution as amended 19 February 2016, the Charities Act 2011 and "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)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2019)

Objectives and activities

The charity's objects are

To advance the education of children and young people, in particular by:

- promoting and supporting participation in projects involving children and young people from different social, religious, economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds;
- providing support for educators and trainers through action, research and professional development in conjunction with other institutions;
- developing resources for use in the classroom or other educational settings;
- offering guidance and support for school leaders and governors in strengthening the process of embedding linking and citizenship within schools.

To advance equality and diversity and religious and racial harmony in particular by:

- advancing education and raising awareness in equality and diversity and religious and racial harmony;
- foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds, in particular by providing support and encouragement for schools' participation in projects with other schools with significantly different populations and/or to work within their own diverse communities in order to enhance the understanding of identity, equality and diversity;
- cultivating a sentiment in favour of equality and diversity, racial and religious harmony.

To advance citizenship in children, young people and communities.

Public benefit statement

In setting our objectives and planning our activities our trustees have given serious consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Introductory Remarks

Our vision is that all children and young people are inspired to create welcoming, kind and connected communities where everyone can live well together.

We support children and young people to consider carefully, with others

Who am I? Who are we? Where do we live? How do we all live together?

These are vital questions for children and young people in the UK, who are negotiating an increasingly complex society. They are also challenging questions that lead to difficult conversations that teachers do not always feel confident or equipped to tackle within the classroom.

We all know how much the pandemic isolated children and young people over this year so that their connections to others became more narrow and the opportunities to meet new people and mix with a wide range of people were more limited. We think it is essential for children to encounter and learn to appreciate the thoughts and views of others beyond their own circle. Linking can dispel the traps of fear, suspicion, blame, misperception, stereotypes, prejudice, racism and hate in an age-appropriate manner.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The Linking Network works to support schools to develop and deepen young people's knowledge and understanding of identity, diversity, equality and community, creating space for discussion of these issues within the school curriculum and supporting teachers to address them. There is strong evidence that high levels of meaningful contact between people from different backgrounds, classes, nationalities, faith or belief, ages or other differentiating characteristics can reduce prejudice; increase trust and understanding between groups and lead to a greater sense of togetherness. It enables children to develop skills of enquiry, critical thinking, reflection and communication, as well as providing the opportunity for children and young people to meet, gain confidence in contact, build new relationships, work together and contribute to the wider community. Our programme is also about improving achievement across the curriculum and giving children a voice and vital skills for life.

Linking requires careful facilitation, teacher training and a supportive culture and ethos in schools and older people's groups. This is why we work with a locally rooted network of partners that knows their schools and communities deeply. Using detailed demographic data, they are able to match schools that have very different pupil populations, wouldn't normally get the chance to meet and will benefit the most out of coming together during a year-long link.

Our work is organised into four key programmes:

- Schools Linking Programme
- Intergenerational Linking Programme
- SMSC Resources For Teachers and Classroom
- SMC Teacher Training

The Linking Network core team is based in Bradford and coordinates the National Schools Linking Programme convening a network of Local Facilitators who lead Schools Linking across England. We provide a structured programme of training, resources and support to enable schools to build high quality links over a whole academic year. The core team also facilitates an Intergenerational Linking Programme across England in partnership with My Home Life England. Alongside this, the team offers resources and SMSC training to schools across England. All our programmes underpin schools' essential work to develop pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC) and Personal Development. In addition to this national coordination role, the team leads the Bradford Primary and Secondary Schools Linking Programmes, Bradford Intergenerational Linking and convenes the Bradford SMSC Secondary Leaders Network. Our delivery in Bradford informs our support for work across the country and as a network we collectively collaborate, innovate and develop the work. We are committed to learning and development, and we are helped in this by Dr Lindsey Cameron, Developmental Psychologist, Kent University and Researcher in Residence to The Linking Network who specialises in prejudice reduction in children and young people.

Together, we've achieved a lot in the last year despite the ongoing disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions that prevented face to face contact during this time. Highlights include hundreds of meaningful virtual links between schools that otherwise wouldn't have interacted, the commitment of teachers who attended live online training to plan their year-long linking programme, a vibrant network of experienced local partners embedded in their locality lead Schools Linking in 29 Local Areas, a growing intergenerational linking programme and planning for our Schools Linking Celebration week in July 2022.

A summary of the activities and outcomes of each of our strands of work during the year April 2021-March 2022 are outlined below in turn. Section 5 concludes the trustees' report by looking ahead to 2022-2023.

1. Schools Linking Programme

a) Summary of the National Schools Linking Programme Network in 29 areas

Schools Linking is the longest running of The Linking Network's programmes. It enables children to develop skills of enquiry, critical thinking, reflection and communication, as well as providing the opportunity for children and young people to meet, gain confidence in contact, build new relationships, work together and contribute to the wider community. It is delivered in 29 local authority areas by a lead local partner: either a local authority or a local non-profit organisation. The work in each area is coordinated by a staff member who is employed by the Local Partner to be the School's Linking Facilitator in their area and lead the programme.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Using their local expertise and knowledge, a Local Facilitator's role is to weave together a local Schools Linking Programme. At the heart of these local programme is a network of schools in which single classes of the same age group, but with perceived differences are matched by the local facilitator. The classes embark on a year-long programme to explore their own and other people's identities, incorporating meetings with their link class both online and in-person. The facilitator also builds relationships with local civic institutions, cultural sites, arts venues, football clubs etc which then provide locations for face-to-face meetings and sources of skills and experiences to enhance the Linking journey.

The Local Facilitator with their individual expertise and local knowledge receives training from The Linking Network in social contact theory, developmental psychology and the fully resourced Linking Processs to ensure the greatest possible positive impact on young people through the programme. The Local Facilitator with the support of The Linking Network's small Bradford-based core team then trains local teachers in these concepts and the specific classroom activities and lessons. The Bradford-based core team provides regular network meetings for the Local Facilitators so they can connect with each other and share learning and opportunities for impact within and beyond the network.

We capture evidence around the impact of these experiences on young people.

'Childhood and adolescence are a critical age in the development of intergroup attitudes and behaviours, and the attitudes developed at this age can continue into adulthood. – so really, childhood and adolescence is the best opportunity we have to encourage positive intergroup attitudes. In fact, cross group friendships have been described as one of the most powerful prejudice reduction tools available to us. All of this means that the work of the Linking Network is one of the most powerful tools we have to inoculate children against prejudice and encourage positive attitudes and behaviours towards difference.' Dr L.Cameron, Kent University.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Since 2017, Schools Linking work has been supported by a three-way funding partnership between the Department for Education, The Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities and Pears Foundation. This has seen our Schools Linking Programme grow from 11 local areas in 2017 to 29 local areas this year 2022. This means that the number of pupils directly engaged in Schools Linking each year has grown from 12,000 in 2017 to 29,000 in 2022.

Key achievements in 2021-2022

- Headteachers of 578 schools in 29 local areas across England signed up 967 classes with 29,000 pupils for Schools Linking
- Building on adjustments made to the programme during the previous year Linking was delivered as a virtual programme in the Autumn Term and it became clear that social distancing within and between school communities was an ongoing necessity throughout this year.
- The Linking Network core team delivered live online training in 20 areas whilst in another 9 areas the Local Facilitator delivered training using TLN materials.
- Live video calls were added as an integral aspect of the programme. As many primary school teachers had not held a class-to-class video call before we created a new online webinar to support teachers. Schools fed back the enjoyment these live calls brought when children were in bubbles and our evaluation by Kent University recognised the impact.
- TLN commissioned a teacher of the deaf to create bespoke primary video clips for pupils to learn Sign Supported English. This was a valuable active citizenship opportunity for Linking classes and was taken up by a high number of primary linking schools.
- The Special -Mainstream Linking was rightly paused during the Covid pandemic due to the wide range of pressures and the need for the work to be face to face. We were pleased to keep developing resources to support future work and teachers who had successfully led effective Special-Mainstream Schools Linking prior to the pandemic worked with us to create new Guidance, which was published in Summer 2021.
- We created six new resources to help primary schools engage parents in their linking journey. Research shows a strong bidirectional impact between families and children. Surveys of Linking Teachers this year told us that 67% of primary linking teachers shared the programme with families despite the challenges they were facing due to Covid 19 through this academic year. For example Oldham Schools Linking built on this and worked with Oldham Gallery to produce an Oldham Schools Linking Exhibition, using the arts as a vehicle for Linking and reaching out to families from every school in the programme was displayed in the gallery.
- We added clearer sign posting to curriculum objectives in all resources recognising Linking positively impacts on all aspects of literacy development and many aspects of curriculum.
'Teachers appreciated the explicit links to the curriculum which allowed them to fit linking into their busy timetable.' L Cameron, Kent University. 'The discussions this has then generated in our classrooms has been very powerful and has linked with our R.E and PSHE lessons' Greater Manchester Teacher February 2022 'Linking is a gift for English' Rochdale Borough Council
- 'We held six live, online Local Facilitator Network meetings through 2021-2022 which brought together all 29 Local Facilitators. These were instead of the twice-yearly face-to-face network days held prior to Covid. Meeting online continued to be effective in enabling us to connect, gather information and share best practice, through what was once again a challenging and turbulent year for schools and communities. The network provides an effective mechanism to rapidly gather and share thinking in times of challenge to social cohesion for pupils. The network is highly experienced with 15 local facilitators having worked in the field of cohesion in education for at least a decade and on average colleagues have 6 years of experience running Schools Linking. Linking helps to support local areas with wider aspects of integration as some of the teams that support new arrivals, refugees and asylum seeker pupils also lead Schools Linking. Local Authorities were clear that Schools Linking supported their priorities, including pandemic recovery, achievement, literacy, well-being and social cohesion.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The list of Local Areas, their lead local partner and the year the programme was established is set out below.

Schools Linking Area	Organisation leading Schools Linking	Date Linking Established
Birmingham	Faith and Belief Forum, Birmingham	2017
Bolton	Achievement, Cohesion & Integration Service (ACIS), Bolton Council	2013
Blackburn with Darwen	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	2017
Bradford	The Linking Network, Bradford in partnership with Bradford for Everyone, Bradford Council	2001
Bristol	Bridges for Communities, Bristol	2020
Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire Council	2009
Burnley	Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre, Lancashire Council	2017
Bury	CLAS (Curriculum and Language Access Service), Bury Council	2018
Calderdale	Calderdale Museums Service, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council	2010
Derby	Global Education Derby	2017
Kent	Inclusion Support Service (ISS), Kent County Council	2010
Kirklees	Kirklees Council	2006
Leeds	Leeds DEC (Development Education Centre)	2019
Leicester	St Philip's Centre, Leicester	2018
London (FBF)	Faith and Belief Forum (FBF) in London	2007
Luton	Luton First Teaching Alliance on behalf of Luton Council	2009
Manchester	Ethnic Diversity Service, Stockport Council for Manchester	2017
Newcastle and Gateshead	Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (Laing Art Gallery), Newcastle and Gateshead City Council;	2018
Nottinghamshire	Nottinghamshire County Council	2018
Oldham	Oldham Council	2001
Pendle	Building Bridges Pendle	2014
Peterborough	Peterborough City Culture, Peterborough City Council	2019
Rochdale	Rochdale Borough Council	2017
Rotherham	Development Education Centre South Yorkshire (DECSY)	2017
Sheffield	Development Education Centre South Yorkshire (DECSY)	2017
Stockport	Ethnic Diversity Service, Stockport Council	2009
Tower Hamlets	Global Learning London, Tower Hamlets (Development Education Centre)	2018
Waltham Forest	Faith and Belief Forum, London	2017
Walsall	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	2018

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

b) Spotlight: Social Action within Schools Linking

Summary

In Phase 2 of the Schools Linking Year, pairs of linked classes engage in Social Action together. Social Action refers to formal and informal activities that young people do together to make a positive difference to others, their community or the environment. Helping children and young people recognise ways their small positive actions can collectively make a big difference helps build their sense of agency and optimism. Social Action provides many of the criteria for the most effective social contact including, collaborative activity, common goals and meaningful interaction. We considered research into the potential impact of building common ground between Linking classes which confirmed that taking part in social action together helps linked classes recognise their shared values. We provide training and resources that embed the six #iwill principles of high-quality youth social action (Child-led, Challenging, Embedded, Socially impactful, Reflective and Progressive) in a carefully structured, age-appropriate series of lessons and activities. The programme includes a Philosophy for Children session on social action, high quality texts, family engagement resources and live online calls between the linked classes to meet and share their chosen social action. Through sharing the things they care about and the actions that they take, the pupils in linking classes broaden their perception of one another.

Key Achievements in 2021-2022

Embedding Social Action continued to be integral to our Virtual Primary Schools Linking Programme. In Summer 2021 the materials were trialed in Beckfoot Heaton Primary School which informed the development of new teacher training materials for 2021-2022. This development work was supported by Pears Foundation and the #iwill Fund (a joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport).

Impact Quotes from Linking Teachers

'The children have loved taking part in Social Action in the Schools Linking Programme. It's made me realise how important it is and how it needn't be an add on to school life. It's so much fun and it's been really empowering for the children to know the change they can bring about' Primary Linking Teacher

'A sense of agency, the ability to make a choice that impacts meaningfully on the world around us, was sadly lacking for so many children during lockdown and the new TLN Phase 2 Social Action resources build this back in spades. For many children this is more than a lesson, it's a profound realisation. Amongst the developing friendships between the classes and sense of shared objectives, they get the chance to do more than just talk about what is important to them. As is right and proper, the social action choice is child led. Teachers guide the process with carefully planned activities, but the ownership of the idea rests firmly with the class.' Rochdale Borough Council

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

c) Spotlight: Shuttle Dialogue Linking in Secondary Schools

Summary

Shuttle Dialogue Linking for Secondary Schools is a new flexible 5 session programme. The programme encourages students to explore their own identity and that of those around them, with an emphasis on connecting with others. It encourages pupils to be open minded, remain curious and seek understanding rather than fixed positions. It supports young people to practise and inhabit a mindset which seeks to connect rather than separate across difference. Both teachers then exchange or 'shuttle' the ideas and responses to the other group ready for the next session. Teachers attend training with their Link Partner. The sessions are fully resourced with stimuli for dialogue, video clips, guidelines for dialogue, reflection activities and a structure for capturing the ideas of the group on a theme.

Key Achievements in 2021-2022

- This year 8 local authority areas across the network participated in virtual Secondary Schools Linking as face-to-face interactions between students were not able to resume due to the need for social distancing. The interest from schools was strong, however the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on school life remained a more significant factor than we had all hoped so some areas and schools who intended to run the programme during the year had to delay the start until demands on staff were reduced.
- 5 local authority areas continued with the existing Schools Linking model with 36 classes in 23 schools signing up to take part.
- 3 local authority areas piloted the new Shuttle Dialogue for Secondary Linking approach with 27 groups from 16 schools
- We refreshed the Shuttle Dialogue resources during the year to ensure they remained relevant as events in wider society took place.
- Where schools were able to use the programme they reported it had a strong impact. Some schools used the programme to link with another school, whilst others used it to build better relationships within the school following extended periods of home learning and classes remaining in bubbles, or a recognition of students 'self-segregating' in terms of their friendship groups.
- Schools found students benefited from the feeling of safety of connecting thoughtfully and gradually through virtual linking. This means that when we are able to reincorporate face to face links, we will retain the Shuttle Dialogue approach. This is confirmed by research evidence that indicates that exploration initially in the safety of your own classroom can reduce anxiety and prepare students for more meaningful subsequent face to face meetings

Impact Quotes from Linking Teachers

'Rochdale Islamic Academy for girls relishes the opportunity to explore identity, promote community and champion equality through the Shuttle Dialogue Linking programme. We hope through this programme that students will have the self-esteem, confidence and resilience to make positive contributions.' Rochdale Deputy Headteacher.

'The Shuttle Dialogue resources offer so much discussion on important issues such as Islamophobia, they encourage students to consider how to be an upstander and not a bystander. This opportunity is about building communities, people being seen and valued.' Leicester Secondary Teacher

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

d) Spotlight: Schools Linking Celebration Week

In late 2021 we started making preparations for the first Schools Linking Celebration Week in June 2022. The plans were a response to Local Facilitators and schools encouraging The Linking Network to tell a powerful, hopeful, national story of what Schools Linking delivers for young people and their communities.

The purpose of this week of national celebration was to provide:

1. A moment for children and young people to celebrate and share their stories of linking and feel the power and solidarity of others who are part of the Linking movement up and down the country.
2. An opportunity to create a joined-up national story of the power and impact of TLN's work to local and national decision makers, funders and wider communities.

e) Spotlight: Bradford Primary Schools Linking Programme

Summary

The Bradford Schools Linking Programme began bringing pupils together across the district in 2001. This work received additional funding from Bradford Council for 2019-2022 from the Bradford for Everyone Programme, Bradford Council as part of the DCLG Integration Area Programme.

Key Achievements in 2021-2022

The commitment from schools for connecting children through Schools Linking across the Bradford District, continued strongly in 2021-2022, despite the huge impact of the pandemic on school life. 120 classes (3,600 pupils) from 67 primary schools signed up to the virtual schools linking programme, with headteachers believing their children would benefit from connecting across the district. A number of schools paused linking preferring to resume when face to face linking returns and we supported all schools in their decision making during this turbulent time for schools. There was a general sense of optimism at the beginning of the academic year in the online training sessions that Bradford's Linked Classes would be able to meet face to face. However, as the year progressed this proved not to be possible and so the programme operated virtually. We had confidence in this approach due to research evidence that although virtual linking is not as high impact as face to face it has significant impact and is especially useful for building confidence in future contact.

Impact Quotes from Linking Teachers

'Being part of Schools Linking is one of the best bits of Year 3!'

'It was valuable for children with low self- confidence having the opportunity to meet new people and explore individuality.'

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

f) Spotlight: The Impact of Schools Linking

Key Learning in 2021-2022

Dr L. Cameron supported the design of teacher surveys and carried out independent research '**Virtual Linking in the midst of a Pandemic: insights from linking teachers**' published in September 2021. This provided us with insights which were embedded into the programme design for the following academic year. Findings included the following: "Children were excited by virtual linking, it builds confidence, they learn to talk about themselves, they explore identity, develop and model social skills, it supports transition, it helps to go beyond the bubble, and it makes the unfamiliar familiar."

- Teachers noted that linking helps children to resist negative attitudes and counteract negative messages they may receive outside of the classroom. *'It is a key time in their development to catch children.'*
- One reason face to face Linking is so effective is because it's fun and interactive, so children not only learn from and develop skills for meeting someone new, but also associate meeting new people with a positive experience. *Classes playing games together virtually provide shared memorable moments. 'The excitement we normally see for face-to-face linking was still there'*
- Linking helped children to go outside of the bubble. 'Virtual Linking is a useful vehicle to explore young people's experiences of living through a pandemic. 'TLN resources provide a useful framework for children to acknowledge their experiences and bring home that they are not alone; other children are also struggling with some of the same challenges.'
- Teachers noted that Linking is good for transition and helping children prepare for secondary school as it gives them a chance to experience meeting children outside of their own school. *'Linking seems a logical place to have the children reflect in Key Stage 2 at that sort of tipping point of their lives.'*

Recommendations from the research included:

- Strategic use of interactive online activities suggested by TLN to create enjoyable, positive, friendly, memorable learning experiences because the children enjoyed it hugely.
- Use a hybrid model involving both virtual and face to face linking when it is possible to have face to face linking again. The virtual meetings with games could be used before every meeting because it was really successful. It really helped the children to break down some barriers.

The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities commissioned an independent evaluation of Schools Linking. This research revealed the following impact on primary school students as a result of participating in a Schools Linking Programme:

- 83% were more respectful of other young people from different backgrounds.
- 79% felt a greater sense of belonging to their local area.
- 79% felt more comfortable talking to young people from different backgrounds about what makes them similar and what makes them different.
- 75% had had more opportunities to mix with young people from different backgrounds.
- 71% were more motivated to work with other young people in the local area to improve the neighbourhood.

The research was undertaken by IFF and the full report can be [viewed here](#).

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

What others say about Schools Linking Programme

Primary Linking Pupils

'It changed my personality towards other people and made me think more good thoughts about them.' Kirklees Linking Pupil

'I have enjoyed that we got to know another school and learn stuff about people that I didn't even know.' Kirklees Linking Pupil

Secondary Linking Pupils

'At first when I started linking, I was unsure about how I felt. The very first session I felt really confident but at the same time I felt nervous, but I got to meet a lot of new people. Towards the middle of the linking sessions, I started to feel more confident because I started to get used to it. Towards the very end of linking, I knew I was going to miss expressing my choices and showing how I felt about a lot of things and getting to know about others' opinions. I went through a really fun journey in linking, it inspired me to do things that I never thought I could do. Linking made me feel more confident about communicating to others and expressing my opinions'.

Primary Linking Teachers

'Children are now aware of the need to be respectful and not to judge people based on media reports.' Linking Teacher, Kent University Research Interview

'The planning and resources are all good and easy to follow. I am living proof that anyone can do this!' Linking Teacher, Kent University Interviews

'Our reasons for taking part in Schools Linking are to create enjoyment and build community, sense of self and sense of place.' Bristol Linking Teacher

'Linking has shown children that we don't exist just in our little bubble, but there are children in other places, and we can link with them, we can talk to them, we can learn from them.' Linking Teacher, Kent University Research Interview

Secondary Linking Teachers

'The Linking Programme provides a great opportunity for students to consider what makes a vibrant community. The resources are highly engaging and extremely powerful.' Bradford Secondary Teacher

'Linking has given our students a voice-it's enriching, the material widens the lens, it awakened our students that they can bring their authentic selves.' Leicester Secondary Teacher

Headteacher

'What I know as a headteacher is that connecting with others is the key to so many important life skills all children need. Connecting with people from different backgrounds and cultures to your own brings so many benefits. It widens experience, builds confidence in meeting new people, expands our world view, changes thinking, removes barriers, builds on children's natural curiosity and much, much more. We all know that one powerful way to combat prejudice is to connect with other people's perspectives. Schools Linking does this perfectly.' Kathryn Swales, Headteacher, Gillingham Primary, 2022

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Comments from Local Schools Linking Facilitators leading a Programme in their local area:

Bristol Schools Linking Facilitator, Bridges for Communities, Bristol

A huge thank you for funding and supporting school linking to start in Bristol. Like many cities, our city has seen problems around social cohesion. School linking is a great place to start in helping our young people to reach across perceived divides and to build relationships

Oldham Schools Linking Programme led by Oldham Council, Greater Manchester

A key priority is to ensure children and young people have the opportunity to meet and break down barriers. The Linking Programme meets strategic priorities around community cohesion, ending hate crime. Funding helps us involve more classes giving opportunities to many more children.

Kent Schools Linking Programme led by Kent County Council

As a main gateway into the UK, it is vital we offer Schools Linking to ensure that teachers and schools have the tools to proactively promote social integration. The engaging resources developed by our colleagues at The Linking Network can effectively support schools to help pupils develop an understanding and respect for themselves and others and explore identity and equality thus opening dialogue between different groups of pupils, their families and the wider community.

Buckinghamshire Schools Linking Programme led by Buckinghamshire Council

'The Linking Network has enabled so many school pupils to experience life outside their own community. The high-quality training offered is appreciated by teachers and supports capacity at LA level to deliver the programme.

Birmingham Schools Linking Programme, Faith Belief Forum.

'Thank you TLN for your support with all the virtual resources and extensive thinking into non-direct contact theory. It has been invaluable in planning our hybrid programme for the year. The network meetings have also been inspiring, reassuring and encouraging. Schools have appreciated the supportive approach. Many schools have said they have seen how disconnected communities have become throughout the pandemic and they are keen to give their students the opportunity to open their worlds up again. We believe Linking is paramount to bringing back encounter, dialogue, connection and understanding of others.

Leicester and Leicestershire Schools Linking Programme led by St Philips Centre, Leicester

'School Linking is crucial to the post-Covid recovery across our region and the significant increase in schools taking part this year is a clear testimony of this and just how important our work is considered to be by schools. Without the funding it would not be possible for the work to go ahead. If our young people have no reference points with which to challenge false stereotypes and prejudices that they may hear then they are likely to believe them and perpetuate these divisions in their lives'

Bury Schools Linking Programme led by Bury Council, Greater Manchester.

'The impact of Covid continues to be felt, and in schools we can see how much children (and adults) have missed being together. Schools Linking offers a safe way for children to start reconnecting with each other and looking beyond their immediate environment to build friendships with people they might not otherwise come into contact with.'

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

2. Intergenerational Linking Programme

a) Overview

We have been developing Intergenerational Linking since 2019. We seek to build equitable partnerships between schools or youth groups with care homes or older people's groups in order to build confidence in contact, dispel misperceptions, develop skills of communication, empathy, trust providing the opportunity for children and young people to meet, gain confidence in contact, build new relationships, work together and contribute to the wider community

b) Intergenerational Linking - National Programme across England

Summary

Care Home Friends and Neighbours Intergenerational Linking Project is an exciting national initiative from My Home Life England (MHLE) and The Linking Network (TLN). The three-year programme of work aims to co-create, pilot and deliver a range of intergenerational, sustainable, community engagement initiatives in the social care sector, with the purpose of connecting the residents of care homes for older people, with children aged 5-14 years old, in local schools and youth organisations, in a way which is flexible, practically achievable and self-sustaining. Care Home FaNs Intergenerational Linking is being funded by The Dunhill Medical Trust and the Error in formula ->Error in formula # iwill Fund, a joint investment between The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. In addition, TLN received NHS funding to develop Intergenerational Linking between young people aged 10 and over with older people.

Key Achievements in 2021-2022

- This year 11 local authority areas are delivering Intergenerational Linking with support from The Linking Network in partnership with the Care Home Friends and Neighbours Project at My Home Life England.
- The programme reached 3,300 pupils with 110 links across 11 areas.
- Five of the areas delivering Intergenerational Linking also deliver Schools Linking. These areas are Bradford, Bury, Derby, Leeds and Leicester
- Six of the areas are new relationships for TLN and we have been delighted to work with organisations in Bristol, Cornwall, Enfield, Newcastle, Plymouth and Sefton
- We held a Quarterly Sharing Network which was an effective mechanism to connect and to disseminate best practice on Intergenerational Linking and share and learn together and has strengthened the work.
- We are currently writing a Teacher Guide for Intergenerational Linking in a similar style to the guidance TLN provides for Schools Linking to increase the wrap-around support to teachers delivering the programme with their classes.

c) Bradford Intergenerational Linking Programme

Summary

We have been directly delivering Intergenerational Linking in Bradford since 2019. The programme had to be virtual during the pandemic and this necessitated innovation to ensure meaningful interaction. The work has been joyful and heart-warming. During one link the children shared their hopes and dreams and the older people shared advice to the children in return with messages.

Key Achievements in 2021-2022

- 9 Primary Classes, 1 school council and 1 youth group linked with 8 care homes and this work reached 330 children and 180 older people. As the year progressed more schools expressed interest. This work was jointly funded by the #iwill fund and Dunhill Medical Trust.
- 10 Secondary schools formed Links with a care home or older people's group and this work reached 1300 11-24-year-olds and 195 55+ year olds. This work was funded by Public Health England via Bradford for Everyone to combat loneliness and isolation.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

d) The impact of Intergenerational Linking

A research report with project findings will be published in 2023 but some clear learnings have already been established:

- Intergenerational linking can bring joy and promote well-being for both older and younger people, and the wider community.
- The role of the facilitator can be crucial in enabling and sustaining these connections with the challenges of bringing together two busy and high-pressure sectors.
- Relationships and good communication are absolutely key to successful and long-term linking.
- Preparatory work for the younger people around care homes, dementia and challenging misconceptions about older people is hugely beneficial.

Impact Quotes

'A lot of older people are kind and full of wisdom 'Child in Sefton

'Taking part in this project has been like a second childhood' Older person in Cornwall

"After the visit I asked Marjorie if she was tired and she said no, she felt the most energised she had in years!" – Care Home Employee

'It makes us feel alive again' – Leicester Residents

'Thank you so much. It's moments like this in teaching that remind you why you do the job! The children absolutely loved it and are already discussing ideas for another meeting' Bradford Teacher

'Being part of the Intergenerational project has given our pupils a real sense of connection with the local community, helping them to feel grounded and part of a wider, local, social network - something that during recent times has been particularly lacking. Pupils have been enthusiastic about making and maintaining links with our local residential home which has broadened their outlook and made them more reflective of themselves and their own families and multi-generational links. The Intergenerational project has provided expertise, resources and practical support to ensure that the project has been a success for all involved. Their drive and enthusiasm built capacity and supported us at each step' Headteacher in Leicester

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

3. SMSC Resources for Teachers and Classrooms

a. Summary and Key Achievements

Summary

We offer age-appropriate classroom and assembly resources for teachers to use, to support young people in deepening their knowledge and understanding of identity, community, and equality, creating space for discussion in school to foster social cohesion and integration. Our resources are written by teachers, for teachers and are available to all schools to support the need expressed by schools. The resources support our Schools Linking and Intergenerational Linking Programmes as well as key themes such as Social Action, Family Engagement, Classroom Lessons, Assemblies and Using Books. Resources deliver English, PSHE, Citizenship Objectives and SMSC expectations.

Key Achievements in 2021-2022

This year, TLN continued to share curriculum resources which reach over 200,000 pupils annually via their teachers. The resources were distributed by local authorities and charities in the TLN network. For example, Buckinghamshire Council Public Health team distributed our resources this year to all their schools to support PSHE and well-being.

- **Family Engagement Resources.** We created 6 new family engagement resources to accompany the Virtual Schools Linking Programme 2021-2022. These resources support schools to engage parents in their children's experience of the Schools Linking programme
- **Social Action in Primary Linking Resources.** We refined the resources that support Linking Classes to explore social action together.
- **Partnership Resources.** We added further stories to the inclusive '#RememberTogether' Remembrance Assembly for Primary and Secondary Schools using resources from The Royal British Legion and the Remember Together campaign. We created a new primary assembly on upholding Human Rights using materials from Amnesty Education.
- **Secondary Resources** Through the year, we were able to respond to challenges that emerged, including picking up on themes and concerns being shared by young people via social media. We produced resources for inclusive remembrance and Handling Sensitive Themes in the Classroom. We collated and shared ways classroom teachers could support pupils in response to the conflict in Ukraine. We created an assembly that was well received about the situation of refugees all around the world, which reminded pupils that the lives of many people around the world can change suddenly and dramatically due to war, encouraging students to reflect on how they can respond.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

SMSC Teacher Training

a) Summary and Key Achievements

Summary

We provide support, training and resources to support schools to develop their pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education. We deliver initial teacher training, staff meetings and leadership training. The training creates space for reflection on existing good practice and identifying new opportunities to move forward. It enables schools to productively apply the Personal Development and SMSC aspects of the Ofsted framework. All our training shares practical classroom resources and strategies that schools can use to teach SMSC, challenge misconceptions and prejudice, create inclusive, representative classrooms and build work on identity and sense of belonging into their curriculum, and whole school provision. We also offer support and review for school culture and ethos

Due to the broad outcomes of SMSC; these strands are constantly evolving in light of the world around us. This means that we have to keep ourselves up to date with developments in pedagogy and issues that impact our children in the classroom. Hence our resources, training and support is constantly changing to meet the demands and rigours of what it means to be a student in 2022.

Culham St Gabriel's Trust previously provided grant funding for this Action Research alongside ongoing funding from Pears Foundation.

Key Achievements and impact in 2021-2022

- Built on our work in 2020-2021 to redevelop our previously face to face SMSC Training Courses as live online interactive sessions and developed tailored versions of Leading SMSC CPD for Primary, Secondary and Special Schools.
- Delivered the training for leaders from 74 schools across the country many of whom are part of the Schools Linking programme.
- Delivered new staff development training on using books in primary schools to ensure representation across the protected characteristics.
- Delivered new bespoke SMSC in the Curriculum training to the 44 staff members at a Pupil Referral Unit. We tailored the training and resources to their context with very positive feedback.
- Delivered refreshed Initial Teacher Training on SMSC in the Curriculum: Building an Inclusive and Representative Classroom to 130 initial teacher BEd and PGCE trainees at Huddersfield University.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Impact Quotes from Schools Leaders on Leading SMSC 2021-2022

'I valued the insight and information on how to assess where my school currently is, thinking about next steps and the amazing amount of resources that we can use to support the development of SMSC.'

'Clarity of the wide range of possible areas that need attention, excellent tried-and-tested resources'

'Informative, thought provoking, powerful, focused, practical, poignant, friendly.' Words used to describe the course from the teacher evaluation survey

I will go back into school ensuring I and other teachers are not 'telling a single story' but are promoting and including more diversity in literature

Impact Quotes from Head of Pupil Referral Unit

'All staff felt that the content was relevant and appreciated that the SMSC training was specific to our type of special provision - it felt it had been made just for us! We liked the various types of delivery in the course. The references to resources and activity examples were great and we will certainly be using these.' Northampton Pupil Referral Unit, Nov 2021

Impact Quotes following Initial Teacher Training

'Amazing, thoughtful and inspiring training' BEd Student, September 2021

'Massively endorse The Linking Network... our trainees engage with this yearly and are always impacted strongly! Highly recommended' Senior Lecturer, Huddersfield University, March 2022

b) Spotlight: Bradford Secondary Engagement through the 'SMSC Leaders Network'

Summary

We directly deliver secondary work in Bradford and share what we learn across the Network of Schools Linking Programmes. We were funded by Bradford for Everyone, Bradford Council from 2019-2022 in order to engage with 10 secondary schools.

Key Achievements in 2021-2022

- There was commitment and energy from schools across the Bradford Metropolitan District to engage in this area of work and this year we exceeded our target and reached 24 Bradford Secondary Schools through the different strands of our work
- During the year, we delivered Shuttle Dialogue Linking in six schools and Intergenerational Linking in 11 schools
- We created and shared classroom and assembly resources across the Bradford District
- We continued to facilitate the Bradford Secondary SMSC Leaders Network with three online meetings during the year. The agenda for each meeting was set by the needs of the Network members and included guest speakers, or a teacher sharing an example of good practice from their own setting. The meetings are responsive to the current context, so when an issue arises which impacts on school life (whether international such as a natural disaster or conflict situation, or changes to Ofsted guidance to schools) we are able to quickly provide resources and updates for staff. For example, in June 2021 we focused on how best schools should respond to the Ofsted report on Peer on Peer (now termed Child on Child) abuse. The teachers involved tell us they appreciate the SMSC Network, both for the opportunity to meet colleagues from other schools and also the resources and updates we are able to provide.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

c) Spotlight: Research and Learning informing Schools Linking and the wider SMSC work of the Network

Dr L. Cameron, Kent University created webinars sharing research insights into aspects of social contact theory. These have been shared at Network Meetings to inform and inspire us and this helps develop our collective thinking.

- **Building Common Ground through Virtual Linking – the psychology behind building social action into linking.** April 2021
- **Intergroup contact and children's intergroup attitudes: The role of families** June 2021
- **Five ways to help young people resist stereotypes and challenge prejudice** November 2021
- **Cross- group interactions: why and how?** February 2022

These webinars are freely available on our website for schools to view at any time.

Fundraising

Section 162a of the Charities Act 2011 requires charities to make a statement regarding fundraising activities. The legislation defines fundraising as 'soliciting or otherwise procuring money or other property for charitable purposes'. The charity has raised funds with an online campaign for the Big Give. The charity has received no complaints in relation to fundraising activity for the year under review.

Given the nature of the funding of the charity the Trustees consider that it remains appropriate not to be voluntarily bound to be regulated by the Fundraising Regulator.

Financial review

During the year the charity received income of £797,648 (2021 £896,770) of which £792,888 (2021 £895,546) was restricted. The charity incurred expenditure of £543,919 (2021 £657,693) including £544,504 (2021 £656,766) from restricted funds. During the year transfers were made from restricted to unrestricted funds of £265,311 (2021 £Nil) due to a release of restrictions by the funder. During the year a transfer was made to designated funds of £270,000 for a contingency fund, grants to schools linking and strategic development. This resulted in net income of £253,729 (2021 £239,077) of which £5,345 (2021 £297) was unrestricted and £248,384 (2021 £238,780) was restricted.

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds, excluding fixed assets, which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between nine month's to eighteen months expenditure. This equates to between £409,000 and £818,000. The trustees considers that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year. Unrestricted, undesignated reserves at 31 March 2022 stood at £80,509 (2021 - £429,853).

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The trustees consider this to be strategically important as we support local authorities and NGO's annually to deliver our programme in their area and we provide funds for this by March each year so that they can deliver their work in the following academic year. This means we are operating over an 18-month cycle. By providing security to local areas by March, they can retain the expert experienced staffing needed to run the programme and lead local facilitators can begin recruiting schools well in advance of the start of the academic year. We hold back the amount needed for grants each year so that we can award these in a stable and timely manner.

The trustees also consider that reserves at this level ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

Our level of reserves became higher during the covid pandemic as our costs for running Schools Linking and Intergenerational Linking and Teacher Training were temporarily lower due to a move to predominantly online activities. This level of reserves was maintained throughout the 2021-2022 tax year but will be reduced by the end of March 2023 by investing in the expansion of our newest programme, Intergenerational Linking, building our infrastructure for Schools Linking to deepen our impact and investing in capacity for communications and capacity for research and evaluation.

The trustees has assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

5. Looking ahead to 2022-2023

It is evident that the impacts of the pandemic upon children, young people and schools are considerable and need multiple approaches over time to aid recovery. Our priority will be to continue to reflect on the best way forward for building children's and young people's sense of self and belonging, and their connection with others. We will keep listening to ensure all of our programmes are right for schools and adapt them accordingly. We will adapt as necessary to changing circumstances such as cost of living crisis and levels of COVID-19 in school communities following public health guidance to schools. We remain committed to supporting schools with their decision-making regarding linking knowing that the relationships between school communities, supported by their local programme leadership, are a long-term journey.

We will continue to support schools to find ways for their pupils to have effective contact with others outside their immediate circle through resources, training and programmes

The Linking Network's overarching Goals and Objectives for 2022-2023 are as follows:

- To sustain, embed and deepen meaningful and positive Schools Linking experiences for children and young people.

Deliver Schools Linking opportunities (via teacher training, activities and resources and local area coordination by a facilitator) in at least 25 local authority areas across England maintaining the reach, quality and impact that TLN has become known for. This will include creating a new blended approach incorporating the learning from virtual linking during the pandemic with face to face linking maximising the benefits of both.

Provide specialist tailored support, resources and guidance that enables local facilitators to build a place based Schools Linking programme in their area.

Sustain linking across the country and welcome further schools into the programme with targeted school recruitment and matching taking place across the Schools Linking programme areas.

Create meaningful opportunities for the local area facilitators to connect with each other and share learning and opportunities for impact within and beyond the network

Continue to promote experience of youth social action embedded in the schools linking programme in order to build civic participation and sense of agency for children and young people

Continue to support the Network to deepen the impact of the programme through intentionally sharing the programme with families and school communities building on research which shows the bidirectional impact families and children have upon one another.

Support local facilitators to continue building and strengthening their local cross-sector networks of schools, children's services, multi academy trusts, cultural and other institutions to support impact on pupils

Develop our support for special and mainstream schools who wish to link once face to face contact becomes possible again

- To continue to develop Intergenerational Linking opportunities between schools and care homes and older people's groups working directly in Bradford and continuing to develop work across England in partnership with My Home Life England
- To continue to offer curriculum and assembly resources and training that foster social cohesion, creating a pathway through primary school and offering tutorials and assemblies to secondary schools. Our training and resources help meet the need schools are expressing for a curriculum that ensures representation, addresses the twin traps of hate and fear and helps us all build a kinder, more connected society.
- To deliver our well received SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) training and expert advice to schools and teacher training institutions in order to support the development of school curriculum provision and culture and ethos.
- To influence local and national government and other funders to dedicate the money and support schools and local authorities need in order to deliver Schools Linking and Intergenerational Linking Programmes to build connection and a sense of belonging.
- Undertake research into what works, continuing to learn in order to develop our programmes and impact.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), registered on 9 October 2015 in England and Wales.

The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Bishop Toby Howarth

Rev Denise Poole

Wahida Shaffi

Zoe Mawson

(Resigned 31 August 2022)

Yvette Thomas

(Appointed 17 June 2021)

Ameerah Turner-Desai

(Appointed 17 June 2021)

Zahra Niazi

(Appointed 1 September 2022)

Trustees are recruited through interview with a panel of Trustees based on the skills they can provide to the Charity. New Trustees are trained through mentoring by more experienced Trustees and ad-hoc training courses as considered appropriate.

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

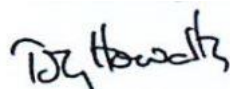
Acknowledgements

The Trustees would like to express their gratitude to the whole staff team for the development of TLN's work through this challenging year which is thanks to their professionalism, commitment, and hard work.

The Trustees and staff would also like to thank the networks of practitioners, teams of staff, sessional advisors, teachers, Local Authority and NGO staff, researchers at Kent University, colleagues at My Home Life England, analysts at Bradford Council and funders for their dedication through this year. We are grateful for their shared collaborative commitment to providing children and young people opportunities to develop relationships, empathy, critical thinking and contribute to wider society.

The trustees, staff team and network colleagues are grateful to all our funders - [Pears Foundation](#), [DfE](#), [DLUHC](#), [Dulverton Trust](#), [Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund](#), [Pears #iwill Fund](#), [the Bradford for Everyone Programme](#), [Bradford Metropolitan District Council](#), [Dunhill Medical Trust](#) and the ['#iwill' fund](#), a joint investment between [The National Lottery Community Fund](#) and the [Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport](#) for their strong support and commitment throughout this challenging year, as we responded to the needs of schools and communities. The trustees and staff want to thank the Pears Foundation, not only for funding, but also for the skills and expertise which they offer so generously. We are grateful for their very practical support, advocacy and wise counsel. We thank all our funders, partners and supporters for their vision and belief in the societal benefits of the work.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



Bishop Toby Howarth

Trustee

Dated: 12 January 2023

THE LINKING NETWORK

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LINKING NETWORK

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of The Linking Network (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity'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 Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the charity has prepared financial statements in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has now been withdrawn.

I understand that this has been done in order for financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

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 charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

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 financial statements to be reached.

Alison Whalley FCA
Naylor Wintersgill Limited

Carlton House
Grammar School Street
Bradford
BD1 4NS

Dated: 12 January 2023

THE LINKING NETWORK

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

		Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
	Notes						
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	-	448,238	448,238	-	454,058	454,058
Charitable activities	4	4,575	344,650	349,225	940	441,488	442,428
Investments	5	185	-	185	284	-	284
Total income		4,760	792,888	797,648	1,224	895,546	896,770
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	6	(585)	544,504	543,919	927	656,766	657,693
Net incoming resources before transfers		5,345	248,384	253,729	297	238,780	239,077
Gross transfers between funds		265,311	(265,311)	-	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		270,656	(16,927)	253,729	297	238,780	239,077
Fund balances at 1 April 2021		429,853	480,773	910,626	429,556	241,993	671,549
Fund balances at 31 March 2022		700,509	463,846	1,164,355	429,853	480,773	910,626

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

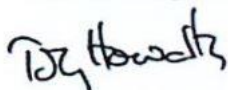
THE LINKING NETWORK

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Current assets					
Debtors	11	134,043		7,409	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,035,815		1,057,454	
		<u>1,169,858</u>		<u>1,064,863</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(5,503)		(154,237)	
		<u></u>		<u></u>	
Net current assets			1,164,355		910,626
			<u></u>		<u></u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	14		463,846		480,773
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>					
Designated funds	15	620,000		350,000	
General unrestricted funds		80,509		79,853	
		<u></u>		<u></u>	
			700,509		429,853
			<u></u>		<u></u>
			1,164,355		910,626
			<u></u>		<u></u>

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 12 January 2023



Bishop Toby Howarth
Trustee

THE LINKING NETWORK

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations	19		(21,824)		398,461
Investing activities					
Investment income received		185		284	
Net cash generated from investing activities			185		284
Net cash used in financing activities			-		-
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents			(21,639)		398,745
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			1,057,454		658,709
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			1,035,815		1,057,454

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

The Linking Network is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), registered in England and Wales on 9 October 2015. It is governed by a constitution as amended 19 February 2016.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's Constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and "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 charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a true and fair view. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities applying FRS 102 rather than the version of the Statement of Recommended Practice which is referred to in the Regulations but which has since been withdrawn.

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

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, [modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties and to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value]. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

The Trustees have considered the expected cash flows for the next two years and they consider that the Charity will be able to meet its obligations as they fall due for the foreseeable future. The financial statements are therefore prepared on the going concern basis.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charity.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out the resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

1.6 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.7 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.8 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.9 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Donations and legacies

	Restricted funds	Restricted funds
	2022 £	2021 £
Donations and gifts	1,760	-
Grants listed below	446,478	454,058
	<u>448,238</u>	<u>454,058</u>
Grants receivable for core activities		
Pears Foundation	300,000	339,650
Culham St Gabriel's Trust	-	15,000
The Dulverton Trust	30,000	30,000
Bradford Council	30,000	4,800
My Home Life Intergenerational - National	50,767	49,108
My Home Life Intergenerational - Bradford	15,711	15,500
The Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund	20,000	-
	<u>446,478</u>	<u>454,058</u>

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

4 Charitable activities

	Charitable Income 2022 £	Charitable Income 2021 £
Service delivery	4,725	940
Bradford Council	150,000	-
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) previously MHCLG in partnership with Department for Education (DfE).	194,500	441,488
	<u>349,225</u>	<u>442,428</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	4,575	940
Restricted funds	344,650	441,488
	<u>349,225</u>	<u>442,428</u>

The Schools Linking Programme receives funding through a 3 way funding partnership between Pears Foundation, DLUHC and DfE.

5 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £
Interest receivable	<u>185</u>	<u>284</u>

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

6 Charitable activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Staff costs	272,459	289,001
Programme costs	182,478	296,409
Sessional advisors	58,826	56,945
Donations	1,602	-
Promotional and website	11,924	4,421
	<u>527,289</u>	<u>646,776</u>
Share of support costs (see note 8)	13,330	7,893
Share of governance costs (see note 8)	3,300	3,024
	<u>543,919</u>	<u>657,693</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	(585)	927
Restricted funds	<u>544,504</u>	<u>656,766</u>
	<u>543,919</u>	<u>657,693</u>

Included in the Programme costs are grants to Linking Programmes listed in note 7.
Grant audit fees are included in programme costs £900 (2021 £900).

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

7 Grants payable

	2022	2021
	£	£
Grants to institutions:		
Faith & Belief Forum Birmingham	7,000	7,000
Achievement, Cohesion & Integration Service Bolton Council	3,670	17,000
Blackburn and Darwen Council	7,000	-
Bridges for Communities, Bristol	7,000	7,000
Buckinghamshire Country Council	7,000	17,000
Burnley & Pendle Faith Centre, Lancashire County Council	7,000	17,000
Curriculum & Language Access Service, Bury Council	7,000	17,000
Calderdale Museums Service, Calderdale Council	-	7,000
Global Education Derby	7,000	7,000
Inclusions Support Service, Kent	7,000	17,000
Carry My Story, Kirklees Council	7,000	7,000
Development Education Centre, Leeds	7,000	17,000
St Philip's Centre, Leicester	7,000	7,000
Faith & Belief Forum, London	7,000	17,000
Luton First Teaching Alliance on behalf of Luton Borough Council	7,000	7,000
Ethnic Diversity Service, Stockport Council (Manchester)	-	10,000
Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle & Gateshead City Council	7,000	7,000
Nottinghamshire County Council	7,000	17,000
Oldham Council	7,000	17,000
Building Bridges Pendle	7,000	7,000
Rochdale Borough Council	7,000	17,000
Development Education Centre, South Yorkshire (Rotherham)	3,000	3,000
Development Education Centre, South Yorkshire (Sheffield)	7,000	7,000
Ethnic Diversity Service, Stockport Council (Stockport)	7,000	17,000
Humanities Education Centre, Tower Hamlets	7,000	7,000
Walsall Council	10,000	-
Faith & Belief Forum, Waltham Forest	3,000	3,000
	<u>166,670</u>	<u>280,000</u>

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

8 Support costs

	Support costs	Governance costs	2022	Support costs	Governance costs	2021
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Phone and broadband	1,013	-	1,013	981	-	981
General office costs	887	-	887	1,810	-	1,810
IT	2,888	-	2,888	2,887	-	2,887
Rent	3,227	-	3,227	-	-	-
Insurance	1,725	-	1,725	1,725	-	1,725
Travel and subsistence	2,553	-	2,553	106	-	106
Bank charges	214	-	214	199	-	199
Legal and professional	823	-	823	185	-	185
Independent examination fees	-	3,300	3,300	-	3,024	3,024
	<u>13,330</u>	<u>3,300</u>	<u>16,630</u>	<u>7,893</u>	<u>3,024</u>	<u>10,917</u>
Analysed between						
Charitable activities	<u>13,330</u>	<u>3,300</u>	<u>16,630</u>	<u>7,893</u>	<u>3,024</u>	<u>10,917</u>

All costs are apportioned to the sole activity of the charity.

In kind support of the charity desk space is provided by Bradford Council. The value of this donation has not been included in the financial statements as a value cannot be reliably estimated for the donation,

Governance costs includes payments to the independent examiner of £3,300 for examination fees (2021-£3,024).

9 Trustees

One trustee of the charity received £400 remuneration for work done, (2021 £nil). No other benefits or expenses from the charity were received during the current or prior year.

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2022 Number	2021 Number
	8	8
Employment costs	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	237,191	251,655
Social security costs	19,440	20,903
Other pension costs	15,828	16,443
	272,459	289,001

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the current or previous financial year.

11 Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	125,520	220
Prepayments and accrued income	8,523	7,189
	134,043	7,409

12 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
Deferred income	13	-	150,000
Trade creditors		1,303	341
Accruals		4,200	3,896
		5,503	154,237

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

13 Deferred income

	2022 £	2021 £
Other deferred income	-	150,000
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Deferred income is included in the financial statements as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Brought forward	150,000	10,000
Received in year	-	150,000
Released in year	(150,000)	(10,000)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Carried forward	-	150,000
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Deferred income comprises funds received where the conditions for the project were not yet been fully met, because the project commenced on 1 April 2021.

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

14 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds				Movement in funds				
	Balance at 1 April 2020	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2021	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
DLUHC and DfE (Schools Linking)	-	391,488	(391,488)	-	-	194,500	(194,500)	-	-
Pears #iwill Fund (Social Action 6200)	-	-	-	-	-	50,000	-	-	50,000
Pears Foundation Core Schools Linking	-	309,650	(27,339)	(17,000)	265,311	250,000	(84,929)	(272,311)	158,071
Pears Foundation Matched Funding	34,006	-	(1,580)	(2,000)	30,426	-	(3,500)	-	26,926
Culham St Gabriel's	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund	-	-	-	-	-	20,000	-	-	20,000
Bradford for Everyone, Bradford Council	169,705	-	(69,705)	-	100,000	150,000	(85,916)	-	164,084
The Dulverton Trust	-	30,000	-	-	30,000	30,000	(30,000)	-	30,000
Bradford Council Intergenerational Linking	-	-	-	-	-	30,000	(22,393)	-	7,607
My Home Life	-	49,108	(49,108)	-	-	45,978	(45,978)	-	-
Pears Foundation (Network Capacity Grant)	-	30,000	-	-	30,000	-	(30,000)	-	-
Pears #iwill Fund (Social action 5428)	38,282	-	(23,596)	-	14,686	-	(14,686)	-	-
Department for Education Extension	-	50,000	(50,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-
My Home Life Intergenerational Linking	-	15,500	(15,500)	-	-	20,500	(20,854)	354	-
Bradford Council (Critical Thinking Training Project)	-	3,450	(3,450)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bradford Schools Linking	-	-	(10,000)	19,000	9,000	-	(9,000)	7,000	7,000
Bradford Council Light Installation Project	-	1,350	-	-	1,350	150	(1,146)	(354)	-
Big Give	-	-	-	-	-	1,760	(1,602)	-	158
	<u>241,993</u>	<u>895,546</u>	<u>(656,766)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>480,773</u>	<u>792,888</u>	<u>(544,504)</u>	<u>(265,311)</u>	<u>463,846</u>

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

14 Restricted funds

(Continued)

DLUHC and DfE provided grant funding for Schools Linking across The Linking Network in a three-way partnership between DfE, DLUHC and Pears Foundation.

Pears Social Action 5428/6200 - Funding from Pears #iwill Fund, a fund created by the National Lottery Community Fund, the department of Culture, Media and Sport and Pears Foundation, has supported our work to embed social action in primary linking.

Pears Foundation Core Schools Linking - core funding for TLN Schools Linking in a three way partnership between DLUHC, DfE and Pears Foundation.

Pears Foundation Matched Funding provided funding match funding for local areas to access local funds, this opportunity was ongoing through 2020-2021 and into 2021-2023.

Pears Foundation (Network Capacity Grant) to support ongoing capacity building.

The Bradford for Everyone Programme, Bradford Council provided grant funding for work across Bradford and this work is ongoing.

Bradford Schools Linking - grant for Schools Linking in Bradford.

Bradford Council - grant to create a presentation of creative Bradford Intergenerational Linking work.

Bradford Council - grant to develop Secondary Intergenerational Linking in Bradford.

My Home Life - Care Home FaNs Intergenerational Linking is being funded by The Dunhill Medical Trust and the #iwill Fund, a joint investment between The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. TLN is a partner with Care Home Fans employing the Youth Social Action Lead for the programme.

My Home Life - Intergenerational Linking Bradford. We received a grant to lead a pioneer site in Bradford.

Dulverton Trust grant in 2020-2021 for core funding for 2022-2023

The Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund - grant for core funding in 2021-2022 and into 2022-2023.

Big Give Christmas Challenge -fundraiser with matched funding from the Dulverton Trust.

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

15 Designated funds

The income funds of the charity include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	Balance at 1 April 2020	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2021	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Contingency fund	-	350,000	350,000	150,000	500,000
Schools Linking Programmes	-	-	-	84,000	84,000
Strategic Development	-	-	-	36,000	36,000
	<u>-</u>	<u>350,000</u>	<u>350,000</u>	<u>270,000</u>	<u>620,000</u>

Funds have been transferred in the year to provide for grants to areas leading Schools Linking Programmes and for future strategic development.

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

16 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2020	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2021	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2022
	£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
General funds	429,556	1,224	(927)	(350,000)	79,853	4,760	585	(4,689)	80,509
Designated funds	-	-	-	350,000	350,000	-	-	270,000	620,000
Restricted funds	241,993	895,546	(656,766)	-	480,773	792,888	(544,504)	(265,311)	463,846
	<u>671,549</u>	<u>896,770</u>	<u>657,693</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>910,626</u>	<u>797,648</u>	<u>543,919</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,164,355</u>

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Designated funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Designated funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2022 are represented by:							
Current assets/(liabilities)	80,509	620,000	463,846	1,164,355	79,853	350,000	480,773
	<u>80,509</u>	<u>620,000</u>	<u>463,846</u>	<u>1,164,355</u>	<u>79,853</u>	<u>350,000</u>	<u>480,773</u>

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

18 Related party transactions

Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel is as follows.

	2022 £	2021 £
Aggregate compensation	113,023	111,893

Transactions with related parties

During the year the charity entered into the following transactions with related parties:

An amount of £400 was paid to one Trustee during the year for work done. This is allowed in the constitution and was agreed by the Trustees. There have been no other related party transactions during the year (2021 none).

19 Cash generated from operations

	2022 £	2021 £
Surplus for the year	253,729	239,077
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(185)	(284)
Movements in working capital:		
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(126,634)	8,839
Increase in creditors	1,266	829
(Decrease)/increase in deferred income	(150,000)	150,000
Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations	(21,824)	398,461