

THE LINKING NETWORK
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Charity Registration No. 1163901

THE LINKING NETWORK

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Bishop Toby Howarth Rev Denise Poole Yvette Thomas Zahra Niazi Alisha Batool Alexandra Enyori	(Appointed 21 October 2024) (Appointed 2 July 2024)
Charity number	1163901	
Principal address	Britannia House Hall Ings Bradford BD1 1HX	
Independent examiner	Alison Whalley FCA Azets Audit Services Ltd Carlton House Grammar School Street Bradford BD1 4NS	
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THE LINKING NETWORK

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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.

The charity has made good progress towards achieving these objectives this year, as evidenced by the activities, outcomes and achievements listed below.

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.

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the TLN Board, may I offer a huge thank you to all of our local facilitators and partner schools who make up The Linking Network for their vital work in building and sustaining the Network across their areas. Especially in times of distress and division, our schools can often become the front lines of trust and resilience-building in our communities. We can easily be overwhelmed by negativity, but I am regularly inspired by stories of teachers and practitioners who with skill and love are enabling our young people to navigate extraordinary challenges with wisdom and even joy. The past year has demonstrated like never before the value of creating opportunities for children and young people to connect, build relationships and feel comfortable with difference. We literally couldn't do it without the work of our partners - the teachers, schools, local authorities, charitable and cultural organisations who engage with this work and the funders who make it possible. We thank you all for your care, commitment and energy.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Introductory Remarks

The Linking Network (TLN) inspires and equips schools to support children and young people to build meaningful connections across all forms of difference. Our work creates space for meaningful conversations within the school curriculum, guided by four key questions: Who Am I? Who are we? Where do we live? How do we all live well together?

There is strong evidence that high levels of **meaningful contact** between people from different social, ethnic, faith or geographical backgrounds can **reduce prejudice, increase trust and understanding** and lead to a **greater sense of togetherness**. Across the UK there are children and young people growing up in **isolated and segregated schools and communities** where there are limited opportunities for sustained social mixing and for developing positive relations with others from different communities. At the same time, discourse in the media and society can be **increasingly divisive and more fearful** and quicker to blame others. When our earliest perceptions of people who are different to us are negative then anxiety and fear shape our encounters later in life. On the other hand, if we have early experiences with new and different people that **foster curiosity, encourage understanding and are joyful**, we carry these experiences with us, and they shape our life-long expectations of belonging for ourselves and those around us. Our linking programmes enable children to develop skills of enquiry, critical thinking, reflection and communication, as well as provide the opportunity for children and young people to meet others across all forms of difference, gain confidence in contact, build new relationships, work together and contribute to the wider community.

Our network of local facilitators delivering **Schools Linking in 25 Local Authority Areas** has continued to be collaborative, mutually supportive and determined to provide the very best opportunities to build local social cohesion. Large numbers of schools chose to create opportunities for their pupils to meet others and we have had another successful year with a great deal of new development and learning. We aimed to provide opportunities for as many children and young people as possible to connect across difference and build understanding whilst recognising the significant challenges posed by the cost-of-living crisis, capacity issues in local authorities and the voluntary sector and the need to respond sensitively to global events.

We also worked towards **embedding our Intergenerational Linking programme in Bradford**, moving towards our vision of **Bradford as an intergenerational district** with every school having a long-term, meaningful connection with an older person's setting. Alongside this, we wanted to continue to be connected to other intergenerational practitioners nationally.

Our local delivery in Bradford of Intergenerational and Schools Linking Programmes and our SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) network has continued to inform our support to other local authority areas and we are grateful for the partnership with Bradford Council, schools and many other stakeholders.

Up and down the country there has been so much care and dedication from teachers, headteachers, communities, colleagues in local authorities and civil society resulting in joyful opportunities for children and young people to meet with others who are in some way different to them. We would like to recognise the children and young people across all our partner schools who take part in linking with such enthusiasm, curiosity and courage.

We know how easy it is for any of us to fall into the trap of believing stereotypes about each other and to remain in our comfort zones rather than seeking out people who are different to us and exploring what life is like from their perspective and what we share in common. At TLN we truly believe in the capacity we all have in contributing to a society where we can all live well together.

Our work is organised into four strands:

- Schools Linking Programme
- Intergenerational Linking Programme
- Teaching Resources
- SMSC Teacher Training

A summary of the activities and outcomes of each of our strands of work during the year April 2023-March 2024 are outlined below in turn. Section 5 concludes the trustees' report by looking ahead to 2024-2025.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Schools Linking Programme

National Schools Linking Programme

Summary

Our Schools Linking Programme has grown significantly over the past eight years from 11 areas in 2016 to 25 Local Authority Areas in 2024. This year, we aimed to support the network to find a pathway for Schools Linking that was right for each local context and the schools they worked with. Working in this adaptive way has meant that **engagement has been sustained and headteachers have continued to prioritise this non-statutory but crucial work**. A key part of our funding model is the capacity grants that TLN provides to all Local Areas in order to facilitate Schools Linking and adapt it to their context.

Key achievements in 2023-2024

- **Our reach: in 2023-24 we** had programmes running in **25 Local Authority Areas**, with over **24,000 pupils** from **approximately 850 classes** engaged in Schools Linking. A list of all participating areas and the programme lead organisations is included in Table 1 below.
- **A blended approach to teacher training:** In recognition of the pressures on schools, we have offered both **online and in-person Continuous Professional Development for teachers**. Nine of the Local Areas delivered their own training using materials developed by TLN and TLN delivered training in fourteen areas. Throughout the whole programme, we have been mindful of **teacher workload and wellbeing**.
- **A flexible model:** We recognise the huge value of **first meetings in a neutral space** that shared visits to theatres, art galleries, museums and sporting venues provide; such visits have been an important feature of our programmes since 2001. Due to stretched schools budgets, not all schools have been able to afford the neutral venue visits this year. These schools have still been able to retain a strong high quality Schools Linking programme and have prioritised the more affordable **school visits between the paired classes**. We are pleased to say that some areas of the network such as Bristol, Bury, Luton, Newcastle and Rochdale have found ways to sustain the enriching neutral space visits as well. We would like to support more areas to be able to do this next year.
- **National partnerships:** A partnership with the **British Library** led to not only promoting their **Step Inside Your Story** materials as an alternative vehicle for exploring identity, but also to offering a live session with the Children's Laureate, Joseph Coelho. He modelled how to use the fantastic Step Inside Your Story British Library primary school resources.
- **Support and connection for Local Facilitators** continued with four **online meetings through the year as well as an in person meeting in the North and the South**. These meetings enabled all local facilitators to share best practice and learn from one another so that they can in turn effectively support the teachers in their areas. The TLN core team also meets regularly with Local Area facilitators to support the development of Schools Linking in their area.
- New work on **Special Mainstream Linking** was undertaken and training and case study videos were created.
- **Guided by the latest Research:** Working closely with our Researcher in Residence, Dr Lindsey Cameron, means we have continued to ensure that our programme is evidence-informed and rooted in the latest insights from her field of research, namely Intergroup Contact Theory. As well as following closely the key conditions in **Intergroup Contact Theory** throughout our linking process, we have also been responding to the latest discoveries in this field, namely the importance of **'synchrony'** (the spontaneous rhythmic coordination of actions, emotions, thoughts, and physiological processes across time between two or more individuals) and of **'felt understanding'** (the belief that another social group understand and accept the perspectives of my group, including beliefs, values, and experiences). We are sharing these insights with teachers and updating our resources so that opportunities for these important features of intergroup contact are maximised.
- **Social Action embedded in Schools Linking:** In the Spring and Summer Term of the Schools Linking Year, the vast majority of linked classes engaged in **Social Action**, including environmental action and campaigning, learning and sharing Sign Supported English and gathering examples of positive news stories and distributing them via a children's newsletter. TLN provides a structured approach that incorporates the **# i will principles** of high-quality social action and crucially offers an opportunity for pupils to gain insight into shared values with their linked class. Social action also builds pupils' sense of agency and wellbeing and provides the common goals and collaboration recognised as optimal conditions for effective intergroup contact.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

- **Schools Linking Celebration Week (SLCW):** SLCW provides a collective moment for children and young people to celebrate and share their stories of Linking and feel a sense of what they're part of. The week in June **explored the key question, 'How do we all live well together?'** with lesson and assembly resources provided to schools. **3000 children** from over **100 classes** across England also joined a live lesson during which they took part in a range of participatory activities. Pupils were able to connect with others and were able to see that they were a part of a national community of linking schools. Some Local Areas organised celebration events to help share their linking achievements, for example Oldham Gallery exhibited work from all 26 schools and in Kirklees, a series of celebration events were held to share their Carry My Story work with members of the local community.

Spotlight on Secondary Linking

Secondary School Linking takes different forms. Some schools use the programme to **link with another school**, as with our primary programme, whilst others use it to build better relationships **within the school** in recognition of students 'self-segregating' in terms of their friendship groups. Whichever model of linking is followed, at its heart, the process helps pupils to explore identity, become comfortable with difference and build connections.

13 Local Authority Areas across the network participated in Secondary Schools Linking, with **106 groups** involving approximately **1300 students**, with many sharing their learning across their year group back in school.

Powerful cultural, artistic and social opportunities catalysed dialogue between linked students: For example, in Bradford, two schools partnered on a Disability Awareness Link with input from a local charity Equality Together to share with their peers a better understanding of living with disabilities. A Bradford multi academy trust opted to link across all five of their secondary schools. In Bolton, students from five schools developed work on identity after exploring art from people who had experienced the Holocaust; in Kent, a newly established link brought together students to consider what a 'connected community' would look like and the barriers that prevent this before committing to a 'personal pledge' to help bring about a more cohesive society; in **Leicester** a group of schools prioritised 'In School Linking' to help students connect across groups they might be alongside but otherwise not interact with and in Pendle **dialogue sessions** used an innovative approach the team call 'Talkeoke' where students had opportunity to sit in a circle round a microphone to share their thoughts. TLN produced a short video including interviews with teachers and students about their experience and the impact of the work to help share the power of Schools Linking with schools that haven't joined the network yet.

Students:

"I enjoyed today so much because I found someone that was similar to me and I found someone different but we still got along"

"It's fun to meet new people even though I'm not the most confident at first"

Teachers:

"It felt like a really valuable opportunity for students and staff!"

"I think the content is fantastic – it's outstanding, it's relevant; it's looking at issues that they're currently dealing with in society; and how different people experience different spaces. Having that content in the materials is great, but what I like is that it doesn't just raise the discussion around the content, but - what actions can we take, to make sure we have a fairer, more inclusive society? It doesn't just raise the issue but looks at how, as good citizens, we can have a collective approach."

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Table 1: TLN reach across England

Schools Linking Area	Organisation leading Schools Linking	Date Linking Est.
Bradford	The Linking Network, Bradford in partnership with Bradford Council	2001
Oldham	Gallery Oldham, supported by Oldham Council.	2001
Kirklees	Kirklees Council	2006
London (FBF)	Faith and Belief Forum (FBF) in London	2007
Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire Council	2009
Luton	Luton First Teaching Alliance on behalf of Luton Council	2009
Stockport	Ethnic Diversity Service, Stockport Council	2009
Calderdale	TLN (formerly held by Calderdale Museums Service)	2010
Kent	The Education People, Kent County Council	2010
Bolton	Achievement, Cohesion & Integration Service (ACIS), Bolton Council	2013
Pendle	Building Bridges Pendle	2014
Birmingham	Faith and Belief Forum, Birmingham	2017
Blackburn with Darwen	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	2017
Burnley	Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre, Lancashire Council	2017
Derby	Derby Open Centre (Programme formerly held by Global Education Derby)	2017
Manchester	HOME, a creative arts venue, supported by Manchester City Council	2017
Rochdale	Rochdale Borough Council	2017
Rotherham	Development Education Centre South Yorkshire (DECSY)	2017
Sheffield	Development Education Centre South Yorkshire (DECSY)	2017
Waltham Forest	Faith and Belief Forum, London	2017
Bury	Fair Futures CIC. (Programme formerly held by Bury Council)	2018
Leicester	Project FREE CIC (Programme formerly held by St Philip's Centre)	2018
Newcastle and Gateshead	Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (Laing Art Gallery), Newcastle and Gateshead City Council;	2018
Tower Hamlets	Global Learning London, Tower Hamlets Local Authority	2018
Leeds	Leeds DEC (Development Education Centre)	2019
Bristol	Bridges for Communities, Bristol	2020

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Benefits of Schools Linking

Independent research reinforcing the value of Schools Linking

The **Department for Education (DFE)** commissioned an independent evaluation of Schools Linking by Miles Hewstone, from the University of Oxford for the **'Social Integration in Schools and Colleges Research Report'**. This was published in **May 2023**. He reported that there was **'robust evidence'** to show that TLN's schools linking programmes had: **'positive impact on many aspects of pupils' skills, attitudes, perceptions and behaviours, including: • respect for others • confidence that they could mix with children from another group • broadened the social groups with whom pupils interact'**. For the full report, follow this link: <https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/evaluation/>

The **British Academy and Nuffield Foundation** funded research **'Beyond the School Gates: Children's Contribution to Social Cohesion'** published initial findings in January 2024. This collaborative research project undertaken by six Universities, highlighted the opportunities offered by Schools Linking to stimulate interactions between children across lines of difference: *'In our research, schools tended to be cited as the main route through which children's contribution to community integration could be effectively fostered. This was because schools were sites of day-to-day interaction among children, and even when schools were not themselves diverse, there was a practical opportunity to introduce diversity through exchange programmes such as The Linking Network.'*

Spotlight on our Observational Study

Our researcher in residence, Dr. L. Cameron from The University of Kent published a report of her observation study of Schools Linking that highlighted the following:

- **Schools Linking develops children's social skills, builds bonds across communities, and opens children up to crossing lines of difference.** Children embraced the opportunity to interact with children who were different to them. All children were supported in interacting effectively, with staff present to step in and encourage where necessary. Throughout the Linking day children explored similarities and differences between themselves and their linking partners with openness, and ease, including questions around religion, identity, and language. Shared experiences, such as watching a play, creative work and dance, created a sense of 'togetherness', building bonds across the linked schools, as well as encouraging cooperation and teamwork.
- **TLN design and format ensures positive social mixing and impact on social skills and bonding.** For example, TLN neutral venue visits create a sense of equal status that is essential for effective social mixing. Synchrony is incorporated into Linking activities because Psychological research tells us these types of activities build bonds across lines of difference and creates the right conditions for positive social mixing.

¹ Sakr, M., Haberstroh, C. & Dujczynski, M. (2024) Beyond School Gates: How local policy can enable children's contribution to community integration. Available online: www.beyondschoollgates.org

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

What our stakeholders are saying about Linking

Pupils:

A Year 3 pupil who had struggled all year engaging with the curriculum and had a challenging range of needs commented following a successful class visit with his linking class, 'Well that was a success for the human race!'

Another Linking pupil commented 'I can't wait to meet Ethan! He likes coding, just like me! I think we could be good friends'

Teachers:

'Over the years, I have seen the project grow and develop giving our young people amazing opportunities, experiences and memories. I will always cherish the visit to the theatre, something many of our children would never get to experience without this project.'

'It has made them understand the cultural difference and similarities with people they might not usually consider communicating or interacting with.'

'Thank you for doing it. It is one of the most important things we do in school.'

'It's always engaging and detailed and welcoming. The resources and books are great and well received.'

When we surveyed around 300 teachers in Autumn 2023, before they started Schools Linking in their classes, only 17% felt their pupils had substantive opportunities to interact with others from different backgrounds and only 18% felt their pupils were confident in mixing with others; 94% felt that schools linking is beneficial to their pupils' confidence in future contact with new people. By Spring 2024, 85% felt well/very equipped to lead schools linking for the rest of the academic year; 71% of teachers felt that their pupils were feeling either more/much more confident at mixing with others from different backgrounds.

A teacher in Buckinghamshire shared that one pair of children, partnered up on their face-to-face class visit, discovered that they were both carers. This was not a part of their lives that either child had readily spoken about to others before, but on this day, were seen to both grow in confidence as they animatedly shared their experiences with each other.

Headteacher:

'From the high-quality resources, excellent organisation and support for delivery and great enrichment contacts and experiences, it has been a huge benefit to our school to be part of The Linking Network. It is so important for our children to recognise the benefit of a multicultural society and the richness of learning that comes from different backgrounds and faiths. The Schools Linking Programme offers us this and the connections our children have made were priceless. The excellent timely communication and knowledge have helped us navigate the initiative that has now become firmly embedded into our curriculum.' **Headteacher, Lancashire Schools Linking Primary School, 2023**

Local Facilitator:

'There are still pronounced social divisions between many different localities here, exacerbated by the pandemic. However, the majority of linking schools in our area would not be engaged in linking without this programme, due to being time and budget poor. Many of the schools serving more isolated, out-of-town localities recognise the immense value of providing their children with such life-enhancing experiences at an early age.' **Local Facilitator of the Sheffield and Rotherham programme.**

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Bradford Schools Linking Programme

Summary

Established in **2001**, the Bradford Schools Linking Programme is delivered directly by the TLN core team. Once again, this year we met teachers delivering Schools Linking who took part in their programme themselves as a child and who talk enthusiastically about the powerful and lasting impact it had on them.

Key Achievements in 2023-24

Bradford Primary Schools Linking

- **4,200** pupils, **140** classes from **83** schools across Bradford formed **70** links.
- **8 in person training sessions** took place for Linking Teachers to meet and plan during the Autumn and Spring terms.
- **Multi Academy Trust (MAT) model** – Bradford Diocesan Academy Trust (BDAT), wanted their 15 primary schools to link in pairs within their Trust and to combine the linking process with their organisation's values. TLN has been working with BDAT to establish this new model, adapting the teacher resources and training materials. **In Year 3**, **11** pairs of classes followed the TLN model, but adapted to a focus on their value of '**compassion**'. This year, a second year of linking was developed for the **Year 4** cohort of 22 classes, with '**aspiration**' as the value. Plans are now in place to again build on this for a third year so that next year's **Year 5** classes will focus on '**resilience**'. BDAT has continued the Schools Linking journey into their five secondary schools.
- Working with **Child Friendly Bradford**, TLN was able to offer Bradford schools an enhanced programme for their Social Action in the Spring Term. We provided copies of a book to inspire children, a live lesson with the author and a small amount of funding for classes to put towards their social action projects. Over 50 Bradford schools attended the live lesson and there was a huge variety of actions taken from seed planting to promoting safe parking to spreading happiness. Being able to support schools in this way galvanised them to engage in the Social Action aspect of linking, creating opportunities for children to appreciate the shared values that they each have and building a sense of agency and voice.

Impact Quotes:

"It was a superb project last year on so many levels." Year 4/5 Bradford Linking teacher

"It is good to meet different people. To see different faiths and environments. We can learn from them and make new friends." Year 5 Bradford linking pupil

Bradford Secondary Schools Linking and Secondary Engagement

- **240** pupils in **7** links from **13** schools across Bradford. Themes included Connecting Together, Taking Action, Pupil Leadership and Voice, Disability Awareness, and Maths Challenges
- Windrush 75 Assemblies were co-delivered with members of the Windrush community in Bradford.

What our Stakeholders are saying about Secondary Linking:

'It's important because if you can meet new people now, you can do it in the future'

'It's good to Link because it's fun to meet new people now, even though I'm not the most confident at first'

"I've really enjoyed today, it's made me realise I need to speak up about injustices that I see. I also have developed the skills of communication and being able to interact and speak to people I don't know. I have been able to reflect on what I value in my life in terms of values and standing up for what I believe. I think events like this are important in order to encourage young people to stand up for themselves and speak out against injustices." Bradford Linking Student

The Linking Network has provided outstanding opportunities for students at Bradford Diocesan Academy Trust (BDAT). Our students have really benefited from the opportunities to connect with young people from other contexts. They have enabled students to make new connections and to gain confidence. The sessions were thought-provoking, engaging and perfectly pitched. Linking Network programmes are extremely valuable and impactful. They really do enable students and communities to link!

Jonathan Kennedy, Deputy Headteacher, Belle Vue Girls' Academy, BDAT

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Intergenerational Linking Programme

We have been developing Intergenerational Linking since 2019. We use the following definition of intergenerational practice in our Intergenerational Linking programmes:

'Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between different generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the younger and older generations have to offer each other and those around them.' (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2009).

Bradford Intergenerational Linking Programme

Summary

This year we have continued to deliver Intergenerational Linking in Bradford bringing together young people in schools with older people living in care homes, independent living schemes and community groups. This builds on our success and learning from the [Care Home FaNs: Intergenerational Linking project](#) (2019-2022) and Secondary Intergenerational Linking with the [Better Mental Health Fund](#). Our long-term vision is for **Bradford to be an Intergenerational District** so that all 256 schools have a sustained relationship with a local older people's group. This year we have focussed on deepening the connections through Intergenerational Linking, to ensure intergenerational experiences are positive and meaningful for all.

Key Achievements in 2023-24

- **60 links between schools and care homes, independent living schemes and older people's community groups were supported.** This included logistics, administration, communication between the linked pairs as well as resources and activities for Intergenerational Linking.
- **Rich variety of activities:** Intergenerational experiences have been a journey that includes preparation exchanges and face-to-face visits. There has been a wide range of activities that links have chosen to engage in such as gardening, armchair aerobics, games, reading and drama. All have brought a huge amount of joy and increased understanding between participants.
- **A Bradford Intergenerational Linking Celebration event** was held on 26th June 2023. 180 people of all generations from schools, care homes and independent living schemes came together at the Mercure Bradford Bankfield Hotel to celebrate all of the wonderful intergenerational connections that have been happening across Bradford. Guests from across the district, including the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Bradford, also joined in the celebrations.
- **Dementia ambassador training** was delivered to students from five secondary schools. This was designed in collaboration with dementia consultants following dementia awareness training for the TLN team with the University of Bradford, Centre for Applied Dementia studies.
- **Comprehensive resources for Intergenerational Linking** were designed and hosted on our website. These help staff at schools and care homes to ensure effective intergenerational contact.

What our Stakeholders are saying about Intergenerational Linking:

"It's nice to see the little ones here. My grandchildren are grown up now so it's lovely to have them here." – older resident

"I'm enjoying it so much, I'm thinking of volunteering at the home." – secondary student

"Brilliant to see this intergenerational connection for our community. From my work on ageing and social care, I know the positive benefits this can bring to children and older adults alike." – Community Leader

"My mum will never believe I've got a friend who's 100!" – primary aged pupil

"That feeling of wellbeing is actually evident in our home...there's just this high level of energy, this buzz, this joy when the school children are in the building." – care home owner.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Intergenerational Linking - National Programme across England

Summary

This year TLN has continued to be involved in national networks for intergenerational practice in order to share learnings, best practice and to collectively raise the profile of this work to a wider audience.

Key Achievements in 2023-24

- We facilitated a **quarterly sharing network** with organisations in other localities that continue to run Intergenerational Linking to share and disseminate best practice.
- We presented our Intergenerational Linking work at **national forums** organised by Generations Working Together and South West Intergenerational network
- We began a **pilot programme for Creating Intergenerational Communities** with Apples and Honey Nightingale, Generations Working Together and Linking Generations Northern Ireland. This involves trialling a toolkit for intergenerational best practice in Bradford.
- We have **advised Kent University and DCMS** about new intergenerational initiatives

Rural Intergenerational Linking

Summary

This exciting new project focused on developing a sense of ownership and agency for older and younger people living in rural areas, increasing their confidence in contact with others. We were granted funding from **The Dulverton Trust** to work with four schools in rural communities to create opportunities for younger and older people to explore a shared area of interest or concern together and then communicate their suggestions for social change at '**Listening Days**' where they could present together to local people with power. The funding was for work from September 2022 - September 2023.

Key Achievements in 2023-24

- **Six schools took part** - four secondaries, one after-school club and two primaries across Calder Valley, West and North Yorkshire. Teacher training, preparation for linking and then a series of meetings followed our Linking Model. The Listening Events provided powerful, engaging opportunities for younger and older people to share their concerns and films have been produced to share their voices.
- A **digital toolkit and project report** was completed and is available to download from our [website](#).
- Dr Lindsey Cameron undertook an [evaluation of the project](#) with key findings that Intergenerational Linking could successfully challenge age stereotypes, build confidence in contact and empower social action in rural communities.

What our Stakeholders are saying about Rural Intergenerational Linking:

'I think their ideas and concerns were far more, far better formulated than I expected them to be, which is a credit to them.' – older participant reflecting on younger participants

'When we met the older people, we realised they weren't actually much different from us.' – young participant

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Teacher Resources

Summary

We have continued to create age-appropriate classroom and assembly resources to equip schools to support children and young people to build understanding across differences creating space for difficult conversations in school. Our resources are **written by teachers, for teachers** and are available to all schools. As a network we have continued to seek to support schools to respond to issues that arise. As well as resources that support our Schools Linking and Intergenerational Linking Programmes, our resources include approaches to Social Action and Family Engagement. Our Programmes and Resources support schools to deliver key curriculum objectives across Personal Development, SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development), PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education), Relationships Education and Citizenship.

Key Achievements 2023-24

- **Windrush 75 Resources:** We shared resources **to support schools to share the Windrush 75 story**. These were developed in partnership with Windrush Generations Bradford, the Windrush 75 Network, British Futures and the Black and African Heritage Network in Bradford. The resources included films of members of the Bradford Windrush Generation visiting Bradford Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form Colleges to share their story.
- We wrote and shared guidance for schools across our networks on **nurturing conversations around difficult topics and handling difficult issues** in school due to external events
- **Black History Month 2023** – a new resource was developed and shared called 'Moving Mountains', which focused on the BHM 2023 theme Saluting our Sisters, celebrating Black British women's achievements.

SMSC Teacher Training

Summary

We have continued to provide support and training to support schools to develop their pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)** education helping teachers to create space in the classroom and school for dialogue around identity, equalities, inclusion, and diversity. 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 and build their culture and ethos. All our training has continued to share 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.

Key Achievements in 2023-2024

- **Termly SMSC Secondary Leaders Network meetings.** Agenda items are responsive and this year included academic presentations on Intergroup Contact; reviews of current Ofsted SMSC focus; discussion on pupil wellbeing and nurturing approaches in schools due to external events.
- **Delivered Leading SMSC from Class to Whole School course.** This supports school leaders to evaluate their current provision for SMSC and create strategies and action plans to foster change. Delegates fed back that the training was 'thought provoking, informative, empowering, insightful' and that the training 'provides very good resources'
- **SMSC In the Curriculum delivered to Primary and Secondary Initial Teacher Training students at Huddersfield University.** Common words chosen to describe the training included: *Transformative, social justice, inclusive, empowering, moving, enlightening, inclusive, useful, practical.* Participants shared the following reflections: *'This showed me ways to approach inclusivity through activities and games rather than just a sit down chat with children to recognise difference'; 'I loved the activities and will definitely be trying these on placement.'*

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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 £541,456 (2023 £492,003) of which £514,000 (2023 £480,220) was restricted. The charity incurred expenditure of £440,772 (2023 £640,875) including £363,052 (2023 £487,741) from restricted funds. During the year transfers were made from restricted to unrestricted funds of £nil (2023 £18). This resulted in net income of £100,684 (2023 net expenditure £148,872).

The payment of capacity funds to local Schools Linking Programme areas amounting to £175,000 was deferred to the year 2024-2025 due to TLN awaiting confirmation of grant funding.

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 in the range of at least nine months to eighteen months expenditure (£330,0069 - £660,138).

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 administration funds to local areas in March each year so that they can begin delivering their work in the run up to 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 who 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.

Unrestricted funds at 31.3.24 £508,876 (2023 £559,140).

Risks

Our Board reviews our Risk Register on a regular basis. Key current risks include the reality of **squeezed school budgets and workload related pressures**. This is reducing capacity in schools and can mean that some schools, despite believing this work is a priority, can find they are unable to take part. Equally, Local Authority squeezed budgets and workload may lead to reduced capacity to engage in leading a local Schools Linking Programme in their area. Actions that mitigate these risks include awareness raising of the importance and positive impact of the work; **increased support from the TLN core team** for local facilitators; **adaptations to the programme**; **Advice and guidance** given during training to demonstrate how the school linking activities can enhance existing curriculum demands and are not additional to these; **Comprehensive lesson plans and all requisite materials** in order to reduce teacher workload and training and resources to deliver the programme are free to schools and local areas.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Looking ahead to 2024-2025

Our priorities for the academic year 2024-2025 are to:

- 1. Enable the continued nationwide delivery of transformative programmes and approaches that build meaningful connections across all forms of difference in schools and their communities:** We will support and equip our existing Local Areas to develop and deliver high quality Schools Linking that becomes woven into the fabric of schools and communities and is responsive to their emerging issues. We will also scope out the potential for Schools Linking with partners in Wales and share mutual learning about building connections between schools with partners in Northern Ireland. We will develop and strengthen our high-quality model of Intergenerational Linking in Bradford to discover what it might mean to be an Intergenerational District. We will establish new Pupil Advisory and Stakeholder Groups to build the perspectives, expertise and experience of children, young people, teachers and other key stakeholders into The Linking Network's strategy and programmes. We will continue to Inspire and equip schools across the country to help children and young people to shift misperceptions and build understanding across difference through providing high quality SMSC resources, training and guidance.
- 2. Continue to develop a learning organisation that empowers our network across the country to thrive:** We will evolve our model based on relevant evidence to ensure that Linking is effective in building confidence in meaningful contact across all forms of difference. We will strengthen our communications to affirm and energise our network and introduce Linking to new audiences. We will work with partners to stimulate national policy and practice that challenges polarisation and enables communities to flourish across difference.
- 3. Continue to build the sustainability of The Linking Network in order to drive our collective impact over the long term:** We will develop and expand our funder and supporter base across the country in order to secure ongoing investment in our collective work. We will continue to build an expert team in our Bradford hub, skilled Board of Trustees and a vibrant network of local facilitators nationally that deliver collaboratively across our organisational goals.

We look forward to working with existing and new partners to deliver this work.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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

(Resigned 20 July 2024)

Yvette Thomas

Ameerah Turner-Desai

(Resigned 21 October 2024)

Zahra Niazi

Alisha Batool

(Appointed 21 October 2024)

Alexandra Enyori

(Appointed 2 July 2024)

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

We would like to thank all our funders – both new funders this year and longstanding supportive funders. We are immensely grateful to Pears Foundation, MHCLG (Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government), A&S Sainsbury Charitable Fund, and Dulverton Trust for their continued investment in the work of TLN as well as additional funding from the Dulverton Trust # i will Fund for our Rural Intergenerational Linking work. The funding partnership between MHCLG, DfE and Pears Foundation which was established in 2017 has been a driving force behind the expansion of Schools Linking to 25 Local Areas in England. DfE funding ended in March 2023 but they stated they have been 'proud to have been able to support the positive and valuable work of The Linking Network's school linking programme over the past several years; and we continue to remain supportive of the programme's aims to promote integration and community cohesion'.

The Linking Network Trustees and Team wish to acknowledge their appreciation of the long standing commitment of Pears Foundation to our work which has enabled our sustainability. Pears support has not just been financial; they have supported the Board, team and network through visits, insight, additional resource from people and advice particularly at times of challenge.

Bradford Council's ongoing support, including provision of desk space, is highly valued. We are grateful for the new Intergenerational Linking funding from Stronger communities, Bradford Council. We also want to recognise the importance of local sources of funding that other areas in the network have been able to access to support their Schools Linking programme.

New funders this Financial Year included Garfield Weston Foundation and Public Health funding through Child Friendly Bradford. We are delighted that Schroder Foundation will be funding Intergenerational Linking in Bradford from Summer 2024 and the UK Fund at the National Lottery Community Fund have agreed to fund a three year programme 'Living well together: Children and Young people contributing to social cohesion' from September 2024 building on our existing Schools Linking work.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

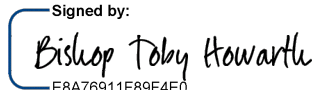
We also want to acknowledge the investment towards Linking programme costs by participating schools and older people's settings that makes the impact and reach of the network possible. This ongoing support has enabled our work to continue to thrive.

The Trustess 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, hard work; particular thanks are expressed to the Co-directors for continuing to inspire and lead the Network. The Trustees and staff would also like to thank the Local Area facilitators and their teams, teachers and practitioners, headteachers, Local Authorities, voluntary sector organisations, teams in cultural and sporting venues, researchers at Kent University, our analyst at Bradford Council, NHS England and Bradford for Everyone, Bradford Council and all of the funders and supporters for their dedication through this year. We are grateful for the shared collaborative commitment to providing children and young people opportunities to develop relationships, empathy, critical thinking and contribute to wider society.

(2) The # I will fund is made possible thanks to a joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to support young people to access high quality social action opportunities

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

Signed by:


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Bishop Toby Howarth

Trustee

Dated: 19 December 2024

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 2024.

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.

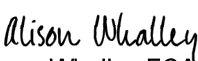
I understand that this has been done in order for financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

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.

Signed by:


Alison Whalley FCA
Azets Audit Services Ltd

Carlton House
Grammar School Street
Bradford
BD1 4NS

Dated: 19 December 2024

THE LINKING NETWORK

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

		Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
	Notes					
Income from:						
Donations and legacies	3	-	439,000	439,000	-	382,586
Charitable activities	4	6,624	81,000	87,624	7,039	104,673
Investments	5	14,832	-	14,832	4,744	4,744
Total income		21,456	520,000	541,456	11,783	492,003
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	6	71,720	369,052	440,772	153,134	640,875
Gross transfers between funds		-	-	-	(18)	18
Net (expenditure)/income for the year/						
Net movement in funds		(50,264)	150,948	100,684	(7,503)	(148,872)
Fund balances at 1 April 2023		559,140	456,343	1,015,483	700,509	1,164,355
Fund balances at 31 March 2024		508,876	607,291	1,116,167	456,343	1,015,483

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 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
Current assets					
Debtors	12	130,631		282,237	
Cash at bank and in hand		991,320		739,901	
		<u>1,121,951</u>		<u>1,022,138</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(5,784)		(6,655)	
Net current assets			1,116,167		1,015,483
Income funds					
Restricted funds	14		607,291		456,343
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>					
Designated funds	15	500,000		514,000	
General unrestricted funds		<u>8,876</u>		<u>45,140</u>	
			508,876		559,140
			<u>1,116,167</u>		<u>1,015,483</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 19 December 2024

Signed by:

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Bishop Toby Howarth
Trustee

THE LINKING NETWORK

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash generated from/(absorbed by) operations	19		236,587		(300,658)
Investing activities					
Investment income received		14,832		4,744	
Net cash generated from investing activities			14,832		4,744
Net cash used in financing activities			-		-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents			251,419		(295,914)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			739,901		1,035,815
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			991,320		739,901

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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. 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.

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.

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.

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

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 2024

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
	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants listed below	439,000	382,586
Grants receivable for core activities		
Pears Foundation	300,000	275,000
The Dulverton Trust	35,000	36,000
Bradford Council	40,000	-
My Home Life Intergenerational - National	-	51,586
The Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund	-	20,000
Garfield Weston Foundation	64,000	-
	439,000	382,586

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

4 Charitable activities

	Charitable Income 2024 £	Charitable Income 2023 £
Service delivery	12,624	10,673
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)	75,000	-
MHCLG in partnership with Department for Education (DfE).	-	94,000
	<u>87,624</u>	<u>104,673</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	6,624	7,039
Restricted funds	81,000	97,634
	<u>87,624</u>	<u>104,673</u>

The Schools Linking Programme receives funding through DLUHC and Pears Foundation. In previous years it was a 3 way funding partnership between Pears Foundation, DLUHC and DfE.

5 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Interest receivable	<u>14,832</u>	<u>4,744</u>

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

6 Charitable activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs	338,128	308,976
Programme costs	36,992	206,462
Sessional advisors	39,369	90,667
Donations	-	176
Promotional and website	2,476	12,049
	<u>416,965</u>	<u>618,330</u>
Share of support costs (see note 8)	19,847	18,915
Share of governance costs (see note 8)	3,960	3,630
	<u>440,772</u>	<u>640,875</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	71,720	153,134
Restricted funds	369,052	487,741
	<u>440,772</u>	<u>640,875</u>

Included in the Programme costs are capacity funds paid to Linking Programmes listed in note 7.
Grant audit fees are included in programme costs £1,080 (2023 £990).

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

7 Capacity Funds

	2024	2023
	£	£
Faith & Belief Forum Birmingham	-	7,000
Achievement, Cohesion & Integration Service Bolton Council	-	7,000
Blackburn and Darwen Council	-	7,000
Bridges for Communities, Bristol	-	7,000
Buckinghamshire Country Council	-	7,000
Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre, Lancashire County Council	-	7,000
Fair Futures, Bury Linking	-	7,000
Global Education Derby	-	7,000
The Education People, Kent	-	7,000
Development Education Centre, Leeds	-	7,000
St Philip's Centre, Leicester	-	7,000
Faith & Belief Forum, London	-	7,000
HOME, Manchester	-	14,000
Luton First Teaching Alliance on behalf of Luton Borough Council	-	7,000
Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle & Gateshead City Council	-	7,000
Derby Open Centre	7,000	-
Carry My Story, Kirklees Council	7,000	-
Oldham Council	-	7,000
Building Bridges Pendle	-	7,000
Rochdale Borough Council	-	7,000
Development Education Centre, South Yorkshire	-	7,000
Ethnic Diversity Service, Stockport Council (Stockport)	-	7,000
Humanities Education Centre, Tower Hamlets	-	7,000
Faith & Belief Forum, Waltham Forest	-	-
	<u>14,000</u>	<u>154,000</u>

The payment of capacity funds to local Schools Linking Programme areas amounting to £175,000 was deferred to the year 2024-2025 due to TLN awaiting confirmation of grant funding.

Internal grants of £7,000 each to Calderdale and Bradford were included in project costs.

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

8 Support costs

	Support costs	Governance costs	2024	Support costs	Governance costs	2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Phone and broadband	1,231	-	1,231	1,004	-	1,004
General office costs	4,719	-	4,719	2,640	-	2,640
IT	3,193	-	3,193	2,411	-	2,411
Rent	-	-	-	348	-	348
Insurance	1,673	-	1,673	1,619	-	1,619
Travel and subsistence	7,995	-	7,995	9,607	-	9,607
Bank charges	216	-	216	221	-	221
Legal and professional	820	-	820	1,065	-	1,065
Independent examination fees	-	3,960	3,960	-	3,630	3,630
	<u>19,847</u>	<u>3,960</u>	<u>23,807</u>	<u>18,915</u>	<u>3,630</u>	<u>22,545</u>
Analysed between						
Charitable activities	<u>19,847</u>	<u>3,960</u>	<u>23,807</u>	<u>18,915</u>	<u>3,630</u>	<u>22,545</u>

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

Bradford Council provide office space and training facilities as an in kind support of the charity. 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 £3,960 for examination fees (2023-£3,630).

9 Trustees

One trustee of the charity received £217 remuneration for work done, (2023 £1,850, one trustee). 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 2024

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
	9	8
Employment costs	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	295,501	261,460
Social security costs	23,375	28,902
Other pension costs	19,252	18,614
	338,128	308,976

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

11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

12 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	126,887	275,895
Prepayments and accrued income	3,744	6,342
	130,631	282,237

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	742	2,034
Accruals and deferred income	5,042	4,621
	5,784	6,655

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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:

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Movement in funds			Transfers £	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Movement in funds			Balance at 31 March 2024 £
		Incoming resources £	Resources expended £				Incoming resources £	Resources expended £		
Dfe (Schools Linking)	-	94,000	(94,000)	-	-	-	75,000	75,000	-	-
DLUHC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pears iWill Fund (Social Action 6200)	50,000	-	(50,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pears Foundation Core Schools Linking	158,071	275,000	(158,071)	-	-	275,000	250,000	(144,349)	380,651	-
Pears Foundation Matched Funding	26,926	-	(11,299)	-	-	15,627	-	(2,564)	13,063	-
Pears Foundation Additional	-	-	-	-	-	-	50,000	-	50,000	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	-	-	-	-	-	-	64,000	-	64,000	-
The Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund	20,000	20,000	(20,000)	-	-	20,000	-	(20,000)	-	-
Bradford for Everyone, Bradford Council	164,084	-	(41,983)	-	-	122,101	-	(57,524)	64,577	-
The Dulverton Trust	30,000	-	(30,000)	-	-	-	35,000	-	35,000	-
Bradford Council Intergenerational Linking	7,607	-	(7,607)	-	-	-	20,000	(20,000)	-	-
The Dulverton Trust Rural Intergenerational	-	36,000	(12,385)	-	-	23,615	-	(23,615)	-	-
My Home Life	-	51,586	(51,586)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bradford Council/Living Well/Social Action Project	-	-	-	-	-	-	20,000	(20,000)	-	-
Bradford Schools Linking	7,000	-	(7,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Big Give	158	-	(176)	-	18	-	-	-	-	-
Beyond the School Gates	-	3,634	(3,634)	-	-	-	6,000	(6,000)	-	-
	463,846	480,220	(487,741)		18	456,343	395,000	(294,052)	607,291	

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

14	Restricted funds	(Continued)
	<p>DfE provided grant funding for Schools Linking across The Linking Network in a three-way partnership between DfE, DLUHC and Pears Foundation. DLUHC provided grant funding for Schools Linking across The Linking Network in a two way partnership between the 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. 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. Pears Foundation gave additional funding in the year. Garfield Weston Foundation grant for core funding in 2024-2025. The Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund - grant for core funding. Dulverton Trust grant for core funding in 20204-2025. Bradford Council - grant to develop Secondary Intergenerational Linking in Bradford. Dulverton Trust Rural Intergenerational - Funding for an Intergenerational Project in rural areas. 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. Bradford Council funded the living well and social action project. Big Give Christmas Challenge-fundraiser with matched funding from the Dulverton Trust. Beyond the School Gates – Research Project funded by British Academy and Nuffield Foundation.</p>	

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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 2022	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2023	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Contingency fund	500,000	-	500,000	-	500,000
Schools Linking Programmes	84,000	(70,000)	14,000	(14,000)	-
Strategic Development	36,000	(36,000)	-	-	-
	<u>620,000</u>	<u>(106,000)</u>	<u>514,000</u>	<u>(14,000)</u>	<u>500,000</u>

Funds were transferred in the prior year due to expenditure made for grants to areas leading Schools Linking Programmes and for future strategic development. The transfer in the current year represents the use of Schools linking Programmes grants.

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

16	Funds	Balance at 1 April 2022	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2024
		£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	General funds	80,509	11,783	(153,134)	105,982	45,140	21,456	(71,720)	14,000	8,876
	Designated funds	620,000	-	-	(106,000)	514,000	-	-	(14,000)	500,000
	Restricted funds	463,846	480,220	(487,741)	18	456,343	520,000	(369,052)	-	607,291
		1,164,355	492,003	640,875	-	1,015,483	541,456	(440,772)	-	1,116,167

17	Analysis of net assets between funds	Unrestricted funds 2024	Designated funds 2024	Restricted funds 2024	Total Unrestricted funds 2024	Designated funds 2023	Restricted funds 2023	Total 2023
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:							
	Current assets/(liabilities)	8,876	500,000	607,291	1,116,167	45,140	456,343	1,015,483
		8,876	500,000	607,291	1,116,167	45,140	456,343	1,015,483

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

18 Related party transactions

Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel is as follows.

	2024 £	2023 £
Aggregate compensation	125,287	128,553

Transactions with related parties

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

An amount of £217 was paid to one Trustee during the year for work done (2023: £1,850, one trustee). This is allowed in the constitution and was agreed by the Trustees. No other benefits or expenses from the charity were received during the current of prior year.

19 Cash generated from operations

	2024 £	2023 £
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	100,684	(148,872)
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(14,832)	(4,744)
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	151,606	(148,194)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(871)	1,152
Cash generated from/(absorbed by) operations	236,587	(300,658)