

THE LINKING NETWORK
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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 Molly Conrad	(Appointed 21 October 2024) (Appointed 2 July 2024) (Appointed 7 July 2025)
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	
Bankers	CCLA Investment Management 1 Angle Lane London EC4V 4ET Unity Trust Bank Brindley Place Birmingham B1 2HB	

THE LINKING NETWORK

CONTENTS

	Page
Trustees' report	1 - 15
Independent examiner's report	16
Statement of financial activities	17
Balance sheet	18
Statement of cash flows	19
Notes to the financial statements	20 - 32

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

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.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Message from the Chair of Trustees

On behalf of The Linking Network Trustees, I want to express our deep appreciation to all the local facilitators, schools, and local organisations who have taken part in Schools Linking this year. We are especially grateful for your continued commitment in a time of increasing challenge and change.

The context in which we work is constantly evolving. This year we've seen growing polarisation and division, both locally and globally. Communities across the country have experienced uncertainty, anxiety and tension. In this climate, the importance of fostering community cohesion and encouraging children and young people to build understanding of each other and connect meaningfully across difference is more vital than ever.

We know that schools are facing ongoing budget and capacity pressures in programmes. Yet, time and again, school leaders have chosen to prioritise Linking, recognising its long-term value for their pupils and communities. We are truly inspired by your commitment.

This year, we have placed greater emphasis on bringing the voices of pupils and other stakeholders to the heart of our programmes. This shift has brought a new richness and relevance to our work, deepening its impact and reach. We are also delighted to now be learning alongside colleagues in Wales and Northern Ireland—extending the spirit of linking across even more communities.

Our Intergenerational Linking programme has once again brought joy to all involved. We have been particularly thrilled to collaborate with Bradford 2025 City of Culture to introduce creative play in our links. Our heartfelt thanks go to the schools and care homes who have taken part with such care and enthusiasm, creating unforgettable shared memories across generations.

We are deeply grateful to all our partners for their ongoing engagement and support, and to our funders for their belief in and investment in our shared vision.

We look forward to continuing to grow and connect together in the year ahead.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Background to our work

'Helps to change your perspective about meeting new people - it's not that scary.'

Pupil in Bury

The Linking Network (TLN) inspires and equips schools to support children and young people to build meaningful connections across all forms of difference. We do this through two Linking programmes: **National Schools Linking** and **Intergenerational Linking in Bradford**. We believe in the capacity we all have to contribute towards a society where we can all live well together. Our work creates space for meaningful conversations using four key questions that foster curiosity, understanding and belonging:

Who Am I? Who are we? Where do we live? How do we all live well together?

There is strong evidence that 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. Yet across the UK, many children and young people grow up in schools and communities where opportunities for sustained social mixing are limited. At the same time, discourse in the media and society can be confusing for young people. 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, shaping our life-long expectations of belonging - for ourselves and those around us.

This is at the heart of our work; creating more cohesive communities by giving children and young people opportunities to experience positive intergroup contact and gain confidence in meeting people who may be different from themselves. Our Linking programmes are led by teachers and enable children to develop skills of enquiry, critical thinking, reflection and communication. They provide opportunities to meet others across all forms of difference, gain confidence in contact, build empathy and trust and work together to contribute to the wider community - dispelling misperception and fear in the process. Our programmes are also about improving achievement across the curriculum and giving young people a voice and vital life-skills. Crucially they are enjoyable and create positive memories.

The disorder experienced by many communities in the UK over Summer 2024 coupled with widespread global conflict, was a powerful reminder of the continued need for work that strengthens social cohesion. Despite the challenging context and reducing public sector budgets, large numbers of schools chose to participate in Schools or Intergenerational Linking last year, creating opportunities for their pupils to meet others and to encounter difference in carefully planned and supported ways. Year after year, schools seek out these experiences for their children because they see the impact: greater confidence, empathy and understanding. Across the country, there has been extraordinary care and dedication from teachers, Headteachers, Local Authorities, community partners and civil society - all contributing to joyful opportunities for children and young people to meet with others who are in some way different from themselves. We would like to recognise the children and young people across all our partner schools who have taken part in Linking with such enthusiasm, curiosity and courage.

A summary of the activities and outcomes of each of our programmes during the year April 2024 - March 2025 are outlined below. We conclude the trustees' report by looking ahead to 2025-2026.

1. National Schools Linking Programme

'It's more than a Linking Project. You are inviting people into your life and just meeting new friends that you wouldn't have even known exist. We've so much in common, it's just really fun. I don't know why we didn't do it before.' Pupil Advisory Group Pupil

'I was nervous at first and then when I met everyone and then they were speaking to me I was like...getting happy.' (Year 5 pupil speaking about a Linking Visit)

'The experience has a huge beneficial impact on the students, who through Schools Linking learn the crucial values of respect and acceptance and the key life skills of communication and teamwork.' - Secondary Schools Linking teacher

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Schools Linking brings together two carefully matched classes from demographically different schools in a district, helping children and young people to connect with peers they might not otherwise meet in a structured and meaningful way over the course of a year. They explore identity, build relationships across lines of difference and this can strengthen communities. Rooted in the key conditions for positive contact in intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954), classes exchange work, meet online and then face-to-face in cultural or outdoor education venues and then visit one another's schools. In secondary schools there are shorter pathways with an emphasis on skills development, community building and allyship. Within Schools Linking, using our linking process to build connections between students at the same school, is of increasing interest, particularly in schools with diverse intakes.

Schools Linking includes carefully crafted activities that help pupils share their experiences with their families, strengthening connections between home and school and deepening the sense of shared understanding and belonging. The year includes high quality social action opportunities for pupils to work together to bring about positive change in their communities and work towards shared goals. In the Summer term, children and young people have the opportunity to celebrate their linking achievements on a national level by connecting online via our Schools Linking Celebration Week live sessions.

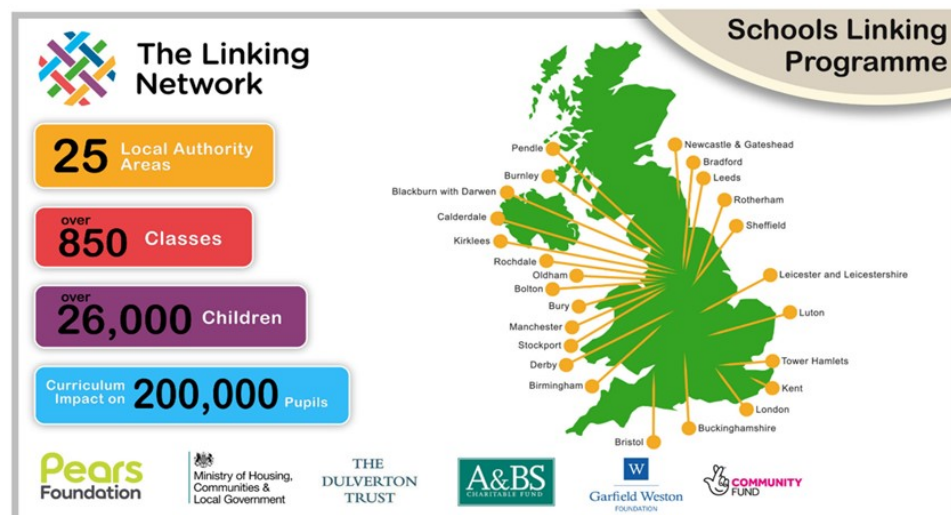
We support a network of local organisations to lead the delivery of Schools Linking in 25 local areas, rooted in their unique context - harnessing local knowledge, relationships and expertise. Four Schools Linking programmes are led by cultural organisations, six by local NGOs and 15 by colleagues within Local Authority's children's services (see table for a full list of our partner organisations). All 25 Local Areas deliver Primary Schools Linking, ten of our Local Areas also link in Secondary and seven link in Special Schools. Local Area Facilitators are locally employed, and their organisation receives a modest capacity grant from TLN to support the recruitment, matching, linking teacher training and support across the academic year to linking schools. In addition to the grant, the TLN core team provides regular support to the Local Area Facilitators by convening whole-network meetings and meeting each individual Local Area to plan the year ahead, reflect on progress, address challenges and make the most of local opportunities. This support has been especially important in the last year for organisations leading Schools Linking that have undergone significant change. Our support for the network is continuously informed by our direct delivery of Schools Linking in Bradford, where we are able to test new approaches.

Central to the success of Schools Linking is the commitment and tenacity of the hundreds of teachers who lead their classes through the programme together with the recognition and support of school leaders who value the importance of this work. TLN works with all kinds of schools - primary, secondary, special, mainstream, faith, independent schools and we aim for a long-term relationship between schools. Our central core team creates, tests and refines all of the classroom resources needed for teachers to be able to deliver Schools Linking as well as additional materials to explore themes of diversity, community, and equality across the whole school. Schools Linking teacher training sessions are held twice a year in all local areas and the core team co-deliver this with the majority of local partners.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025



Key achievements 2024-2025

26,000 children and young people took part in Schools Linking. Our network of local facilitators delivering Schools Linking in 25 Local Authority Areas continues to be collaborative, mutually supportive and determined to provide the very best opportunities for children to feel connected with their peers and within their wider communities. They are all delivering a local Schools Linking Programme with energy, vision and creativity - collectively reaching **26,000 children, 850 classes** in over **500 schools** across England.

Schools Linking Celebration Week took place in June 2024, enabling pupils and their teachers to feel part of a national movement of schools connecting. Over 3,500 primary school pupils joined a live online Linking session and many local celebrations took place reaching into communities.

Reaching high proportions of schools in areas of deprivation.

Our records show that over a fifth (22%) of our linking schools are in the lowest decile for IMD (Indices of multiple deprivation), whilst over half of our linking schools (55%) are in the four lowest indices of multiple deprivation. The remainder of our schools are across all the higher six indices showing that we are bringing children from different localities together. 86% of Linking Schools were in Urban Areas with 14% in Rural Areas.

Increase in social confidence in pupils who are usually withdrawn in class. This impact has been independently commented on by headteachers and teachers from across our network. These quotes below are just examples: *'I am seeing three children who we are really concerned about their social interaction in school flourishing socially today.'* Primary Headteacher *'Children who find making friends challenging have made new friends... it was incredible to see.'* Primary teacher. We have been discussing with researchers how we can further understand this important effect.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Innovation in Secondary Schools Linking - Across the network, local areas delivered a range of exciting approaches in secondary schools. This included linking young carers, student leaders, new arrivals, students with English as an additional language or students focusing on specific subjects such as Religious Education, Art and Maths. The Linking students had the opportunity to lead a range of activities, including engaging in meaningful dialogue with the wider community, facilitating an assembly for their entire year group, or connecting with elected members of their Council.

Enhancing Links with neutral venue visits to local cultural experiences. In 13 of the Local Areas neutral venue visits took place which created a wonderful space for the first meetings of the two classes, strengthening the connection between the children and opening up the local cultural life available to both schools. For many children involved in Schools Linking, the visit can be the first time they have been in a theatre, museum or art gallery. Venues hosting link days included M6 Theatre in Rochdale, Stockwood Gallery in Luton, Oldham Gallery, the Laing Gallery in Newcastle.

Developing local Pupil Advisory Groups to ensure children and young people's perspectives and experiences shape the future of Schools Linking. At the heart of our programme, children have a chance to talk about their identity and their voice is valued and listened to throughout the Link. This year, we have trialled new approaches to involve pupils in shaping the Schools Linking programme and sharing their voice across their local areas. Pupil Advisory Groups have been established in six of our Local Areas bringing insight and energy. Changes are already being made to the programme as a direct result of pupil feedback. For example, pupils told us they enjoyed online video call sessions and felt it helped them connect as part of their Linking Journey so more are being designed and planned for next year.

Establishing Stakeholder Advisory Groups that can support the Schools Linking Programme in their local areas. We have established two pilot Stakeholder Advisory Groups in Calderdale and Leicester in order to help programmes build local roots and connections. As a direct result of the new group in Calderdale, cultural funding was identified to enable pairs of classes to take part in neutral venue Links in a local museum, local transport was sourced for Link Visits and a celebration in the Town Hall was arranged. Likewise, in Leicester gathering stakeholders raised awareness, offered local insight to the facilitator about potential partnerships and enabled Leicester Schools Linking to raise funds through a crowdfunding campaign.

Building agency through social action. Across the network linking schools undertook social action as part of their Linking Programme. In addition, our Primary Schools Linking programme in Bradford partnered with Child Friendly Bradford to enhance children's experience of social action, building appreciation of their shared values, sense of agency and voice. Classes received a book full of ideas to inspire their planning, took part in a live lesson with an inspirational author, and were given a small amount of funding to put towards their chosen social action projects. Pupils took action in a variety of creative ways, from seed planting, to promoting safe parking, to spreading happiness within their schools and communities.

Schools Linking embedded in a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). We are working closely with a Bradford Multi Academy Trust to explore delivering Schools Linking across the whole Trust. All 22 classes from Years 3, 4 and 5 of their Primary schools are taking part in Linking, with plans for all Year 6 classes across the MAT to join in 2025–2026. A refreshed curriculum is being written for each year group, ensuring the programme develops progressively as pupils move through the school. The same MAT also delivers Schools Linking across its five very different secondary schools, enabling pupils to connect and explore key questions about identity, community and belonging as they move into the next phase of their education.

Scaling our work to more communities across the UK. Cardiff Schools Linking Programme will launch in Autumn 2025, supporting the delivery of outcomes in the Anti Racist Wales Action Plan. We have established a strong partnership in Wales with the team at EMTAS (Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Services), Children's Services and Cardiff Council. Drawing on deep local knowledge, the team at EMTAS has recruited and matched 16 classes across Cardiff. From the 2025–26 academic year, these children will have new opportunities to connect across difference as part of the wider Schools Linking network.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Sharing learning and good practice with colleagues in Northern Ireland. We were delighted to collaborate with Queens University Belfast (QUB) on planning a conference to exchange learning between practitioners in Northern Ireland and England in May 2025. Key representatives have been invited from Shared Education, Integrated Education, Peace Plus, academia and the Education Authority.

Creating new resources for schools to help build understanding across difference. We developed new classroom and assembly resources in response to key challenges experienced in our Local Areas last year. 'The Day After' assembly resources highlighted solidarity after the disorder experienced in the UK in Summer 2024, while 'If You Knew My Story...' helped pupils appreciate the lived experiences of new arrivals and refugee students within their school communities. Each resource reminds pupils that we are all shaped by stories that influence and impact each day of our lives and that, through kindness and understanding, we can all make a difference in the lives of others. These resources were also shared with schools that don't currently run a Schools Linking programme.

'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.' Headteacher, Kirklees Schools Linking Programme

'The school ensures it prepares pupils for life beyond the locality. For example, it has twinned with a school in a contrasting location. This helps pupils to develop their understanding of diversity in modern Britain.' Flax Bourton CofE Primary Ofsted Inspection Report, April 2025 (the school takes part in Schools Linking)

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Schools Linking Area	Organisation leading Schools Linking	Date Linking Established
Bradford	The Linking Network, Bradford in partnership with Bradford Council	2001
Oldham	Gallery Oldham, Oldham Council.	2001
Kirklees	Shape North, supported by 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	Calderdale Museums Service, Calderdale Council)	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, Bury	2018
Leicester and Leicestershire	Project FREE CIC, Leicester	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

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

2. Intergenerational Linking

"My daughter has loved coming; she's really enjoyed it. She tells me about Jean, her Gran Friend, all the time." - Parent

"I shall miss them when they don't come any more, please can we make sure they visit again?" - Resident

"It was good when they came to visit us at school because they were drawing with us. We were all hoping Renee would come and she did!" - Pupil

Intergenerational Linking brings together young people in schools with older people living in care homes, independent living or from community groups. Through Intergenerational Linking, young and older people share time and stories which creates meaningful and lasting relationships between generations. This helps schools connect positively with their wider community and we know there are huge benefits in terms of combating loneliness and building well-being. The intersectional nature of Intergenerational Linking also has the potential to challenge hate and build social cohesion.

This year we advanced our vision of Bradford becoming an Intergenerational District, where every school builds lasting connections with older people's settings. We expanded to 67 partnerships, engaging 2,200 pupils and around 1,000 older people across 21 of 23 postcodes. Alongside this growth, we strengthened our model through new activities and resources, expanded Dementia Ambassador training, in-depth evaluation and national sharing of best practice.

This work is amplified by the strong support of Bradford Council and the wider community. The Council's backing, including access to their portal and newsletters, has helped us extend our reach, while local media and partner organisations have championed the programme through their own channels.

This year, a partnership with Bradford 2025 City of Culture enabled Creative Practitioners to bring the 'Intergenerational Play' project to 20 Links across the district. Their work introduced new activities, gathered fresh insights and raised the profile of Intergenerational Linking in Bradford, creating more opportunities for joy, friendship and connection across generations.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Key Achievements 2024–25:

Expanded reach and stronger relationships - We are now working across 50 older people's settings in Bradford – including 39 care homes, 10 independent living centres and 2 community groups. 16 settings now have more than one active Link, showing the strong value placed on these connections. On the schools' side, 4 nurseries, 46 primary schools and 15 secondary schools are now part of Intergenerational Linking, spread across Bradford and reaching children of all ages.

Creative enrichment through Bradford 2025 - In partnership with Bradford 2025, the Intergenerational Play project strengthened 10 existing Links and created 10 new connections across the district. Through arts, storytelling and imaginative play, children and older people deepened and built on enriching relationships. These partnerships have also raised the profile of the programme.

Developing a rich variety of activities and resources - This year, children and older people have connected through reading, gardening, play and creative projects that have sparked joy and conversation. With funding support, we expanded our online collection of Intergenerational Linking resources, offering practical tools for every stage of the journey from preparation to first meetings, to sustaining long-term connections. Through facilitator observations and our partnership with Bradford 2025, we developed a new bank of playful and creative resources that actively encourage interaction and support connection across generations. These tested resources, built on experience and insight, are now enriching our network and support schools and care settings with the tools to foster meaningful, lasting relationships.

Expanding Dementia Ambassador Training - We trained 60 Health & Social Care students as Dementia Ambassadors in a Bradford secondary school and piloted our first workshop for primary pupils. Co-developed with dementia specialists, the training is age-appropriate, practical and demonstrates the role young people can play in raising dementia awareness. The results have been powerful: children spoke with pride about their learning, recalled dementia's impact in creative ways and showed greater empathy and patience during care home visits. Staff observed how the training visibly deepened the quality of interactions with residents. Building on these successes, we see significant potential to expand this strand of work in the year ahead.

As our programme grows, intergenerational relationships are strengthening and meaningful, lasting connections are taking root across the district. We are seeing ripple effects in schools, families and communities, where the impact of these relationships continues to spread:

"I've been teaching for over 25 years and hand on heart I can say it was one of the most magical experiences of my career." - Deputy Headteacher

"My son has talked about coming here and how he's met someone who is 102 years old! His Grandma doesn't speak English but he's told her about some of the people he's met. He has loved it and will be sad today that it's finished." - Parent

"I truly hope that every time a child like myself visits it brings happiness and joy to the residents' hearts" - Pupil

"My favourite afternoon at work for a long time!!! It was such a joy to see the children and residents having such a great time and to hear that some of the residents who do not normally show any enjoyment in any activities spent the whole session smiling was just amazing." - Assistant Vice Principle

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

3. Developing a learning organisation that empowers our network across the country

We believe every child and young person should have the opportunity to form high quality connections across difference during their education journey in primary, secondary and special schools. To achieve this, we are continuing to strengthen our Linking programmes - creating an environment where schools and teachers feel empowered to celebrate and embed this work, and where our wider network can continue to learn from and inspire one another.

Understanding the impact of Schools Linking from our link teachers.

In Autumn 2024, before they started Schools Linking in their classes, just 23% of the 335 teachers surveyed felt their pupils had substantive opportunities to interact with others from different backgrounds. 92% felt that Schools Linking would be beneficial to their pupils' confidence in future contact with new people. By Spring 2025, 64% felt that their pupils were already feeling more/much more confident at mixing with others from different backgrounds.

In answer to the question about the observed impact of Schools Linking on their children by the end of the Linking Year the 3 most common themes from the teacher survey were: increasing confidence and self-esteem, providing opportunities for friendship and positive interactions and increased understanding of and respect for diversity.

Evidence-informed practice. We continue to evolve our Linking model based on relevant evidence to ensure that Linking is effective in building confidence in meaningful contact across all forms of difference. Research input on the power of designing 'synchronicity' into shared activities in order to build connection shaped new classroom resource development for the programme. Input from research at the University of Exeter into the critical role of 'Felt Understanding' in Intergroup relations - that feeling understood and listened to by other groups leads to more trust and positive views of others sparked reflection on additional ways we could put this research into practice in our Linking programmes.

Evaluating Intergenerational Linking. This year, our researcher-in-residence, Dr Lindsey Cameron (University of Kent), began a comprehensive mixed-method evaluation of Bradford Intergenerational Linking. Using observations, interviews and surveys, the study is capturing impact on wellbeing, social connection and attitudes to ageing. Building on previous evaluations, this bespoke research will help us pinpoint the mechanisms that make Intergenerational Linking effective, strengthening both our practice and the wider evidence base.

Sharing our learning and Intergenerational Linking model across the country - Alongside evaluation, we are committed to sharing our model nationally to inspire wider intergenerational practice. This year we contributed to intergenerational networks, including Creating Intergenerational Communities (CIC), Gen-All, United for All Ages and Southeast Intergenerational Community of Practice. Through this, we have connected with practitioners across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Spain. With funding from City St George's, University of London, we undertook follow-up research to our Care Home FaNs: Intergenerational Linking project to capture the ongoing impact 18 months on. The report demonstrated the long-term impact of the local broker-led model and highlighted how securing further funding and participating in cultural events has strengthened sustainability. We will continue to promote Bradford as a leading example of intergenerational practice, contributing to the growing national evidence base.

Communications strengthened to help raise awareness and understanding nationally: We showcased examples of how Linking can support community cohesion through an Impact Report published in early 2025, regular newsletters and articles on our website and our 4th national Schools Linking Celebration Week. We know there is more to do to highlight the extent of the difficult and important work led by our Local Areas across the country.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Working to affect systems change: We sought opportunities to share perspectives, trends and our learning about good practice on building connection and community cohesion in schools and communities. We meet regularly with civil servants at MHCLG. We are active members of a national Cohesion Network convened by Belong. We submitted evidence in a number of reviews; the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, the Independent Communities and Cohesion Commission; the MHCLG Independent Review into civil unrest in Leicester and the Department for Education Curriculum & Assessment Review call for evidence. We were encouraged by the Interim Report (March 2025) of the DfE review, which stated: *“...it will be important that we also make sure they encounter the unfamiliar, and have their horizons stretched and broadened...Inclusion is also prompted by shared experiences, the creation of connections, and the ability to see and experience a wide range of perspectives”*.

4. Looking ahead to 2025-2026

Our priorities for the academic year 2025-2026 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 26 Local Areas, including Cardiff Schools Linking, to deliver a high-quality Schools Linking programme that is responsive to their emerging issues and is woven into the fabric of their communities. We will support all of our Local Areas to create forums for meaningful discussion with pupils and wider stakeholders as well as further explore the power of family engagement. A number of new Local Authority Areas and Multi-Academy Trusts have expressed the desire to establish Schools Linking in their schools - we would like to explore ways they could join the network. We look forward to the ongoing mutual exchange of learning with colleagues working on intergroup contact with schools in Northern Ireland. We will continue to build on our high quality Intergenerational Linking model in Bradford.

2. Continue to develop a learning organisation that empowers our network across the country to flourish

We are excited to build on our work with researchers in the field of Intergroup Contact Theory so that the latest research continues to shape and improve our programmes alongside the insights we gather from pupils, teachers and wider stakeholders. We will continue to work with our national network of 26 Local Areas to share learning and experience from the ground in order to inform policy and wider practice so that more pupils can connect meaningfully across difference, feel a sense of belonging and thrive in their communities.

3. Continue to build the sustainability of The Linking Network in order to drive our collective impact over the long term

Our expert team in our Bradford hub will continue to collaborate with our skilled Board of Trustees and our vibrant network of local facilitators nationally to deliver together across our organisational goals. We will work closely with our funders and seek to develop new partnerships in order to secure ongoing support for our collective work and meet the increased demand for our Linking programmes.

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.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Financial review

During the year the charity received income of £823,196 (2024 £541,456) of which £513,847 (2024 £520,000) was restricted. The charity incurred expenditure of £815,385 (2024 £440,772) including £607,273 (2024 £363,052) from restricted funds. During the year transfers were made to restricted from unrestricted funds of £13,000 (2024 £nil). This resulted in net income of £7,811 (2024 net income £100,684).

This year the capacity grants paid to our local Schools Linking Programmes for the academic year 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 were both paid in this tax year. This shows as a lower cost in the previous tax year and higher cost in 2024-2025- this was due to the timing of the start date of work with a new funder.

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds, excluding fixed assets, should be maintained at a level of a range of at least nine months operating costs, this amounts to £606,000. The trustees 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, and crucially the disbursement of grants to Local Areas in advance of each academic year, while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

Unrestricted funds at 31.3.25 £597,473 (2024 £508,876).

Risk management

The Board of Trustees review the Risk Register on a regular basis, which details operational and safeguarding risks relating to our work with children and young people as well as risks that relate to the sustainability and growth of our programmes. Examples include:

- Capacity pressures in schools create challenges for participation in our Linking Programmes. In particular, there are pressing needs within schools to support pupils and their families with the challenges of SEND, mental health and poverty as well as many demands for curriculum time.
- Cost pressures in schools are a barrier to participation. For example, transport costs are now incredibly high, increasing the cost of Schools Linking visits. In addition, hosting visits in neutral venues has become more expensive. As a result, in around 50% of our Local areas, it's not currently possible to arrange first visits at neutral venues and this means that pupils are missing out on important cultural experiences that could strengthen their sense of local belonging.
- Turnover of key staff in schools, care settings and local partners, who play a central role in making Schools or Intergenerational Linking happen, can disrupt the flow of the Linking journey.
- The funding context across Local Authorities and the voluntary sector is a risk to the sustainability of our Schools Linking partners in Local Areas.

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 and link teachers; the continuation of the capacity grant to support the local facilitators; equipping local areas to fundraise locally in order to enhance and expand the programmes; adaptations to the programmes that offer additional low cost ways for pupils to connect with their link; advice and guidance given during training with link teachers on safeguarding during Linking activities and to demonstrate how Linking promotes achievement and can be embedded in the curriculum; comprehensive lesson plans and all requisite materials in order to reduce teacher workload; keeping training and resources to deliver the programme free for schools and local areas; and regularly updating our policies and procedures.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) *FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025*

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)
Molly Conrad	(Appointed 7 July 2025)

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.

THE LINKING NETWORK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Acknowledgements

The Trustees and the team would 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 and Queen's University, Belfast and analyst support at Bradford Council for their dedication through this year.

The shared collaborative commitment by so many people to providing children and young people joyful experiences across all forms of difference that develop relationships, empathy and critical thinking is creating stronger, more cohesive communities.

*We would like to thank all our funders – both new funders this year and longstanding funders. New funders this Financial Year included: the UK Fund at the **National Lottery Community Fund** which is now funding a three-year programme, 'Living well together: Children and Young people contributing to social cohesion'. This began in September 2024 and builds on our existing Schools Linking work; **Schroder Foundation**, funding Intergenerational Linking in Bradford from Summer 2024 and as part of Bradford's City of Culture, **Bradford 2025** is funding an intergenerational project which focuses on the theme of 'play'. We are immensely grateful to **Pears Foundation**, **MHCLG** (Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government), **A&S Sainsbury Charitable Fund**, **Garfield Weston**, **Child Friendly Bradford**, **Bradford Council** and the **Dulverton Trust** for their continued investment in the work of TLN.*

Bradford Council's ongoing support over decades, including provision of office space for our team is highly valued enabling our work to flourish locally and share good practice nationally.

We also want to recognise the importance of the local organisations across our network that lead Schools Linking and the local sources of funding that areas in the network have been able to access to support their Schools Linking programme.

The Linking Network Trustees and Team wish to acknowledge their appreciation for 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.

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.

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; particular thanks are expressed to the Co-directors for continuing to inspire and lead the Network.

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

Signed by:


Bishop Toby Howarth
 Trustee
 Dated: 17 December 2025

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 2025.

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.

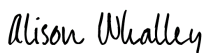
I understand that this has been done in order for financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

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: 17 December 2025

THE LINKING NETWORK

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	282,500	419,500	702,000	-	439,000	439,000
Charitable activities	4	2,276	93,987	96,263	6,624	81,000	87,624
Investments	5	24,933	-	24,933	14,832	-	14,832
Total income		309,709	513,487	823,196	21,456	520,000	541,456
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	6	208,112	607,273	815,385	71,720	369,052	440,772
Net incoming/ (outgoing) resources before transfers		101,597	(93,786)	7,811	(50,264)	150,948	100,684
Gross transfers between funds		(13,000)	13,000	-	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		88,597	(80,786)	7,811	(50,264)	150,948	100,684
Fund balances at 1 April 2024		508,876	607,291	1,116,167	559,140	456,343	1,015,483
Fund balances at 31 March 2025		597,473	526,505	1,123,978	508,876	607,291	1,116,167

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 2025

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Current assets					
Debtors	12	2,254		130,631	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,184,518		991,320	
		1,186,772		1,121,951	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(62,794)		(5,784)	
Net current assets			1,123,978		1,116,167
Income funds					
Restricted funds	14		526,505		607,291
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>					
Designated funds	15	566,500		500,000	
General unrestricted funds		30,973		8,876	
			597,473		508,876
			1,123,978		1,116,167

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 17 December 2025

Signed by:

E8A76911F89F4E0...
Bishop Toby Howarth
Trustee

THE LINKING NETWORK

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash generated from operations	19		168,265		236,587
Investing activities					
Investment income received		24,933		14,832	
Net cash generated from investing activities			24,933		14,832
Net cash used in financing activities			-		-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents			193,198		251,419
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			991,320		739,901
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			1,184,518		991,320

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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 2025

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 2025

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

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Restricted funds
	2025 £	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £
Donations and gifts	12,500	-	12,500	-
Grants listed below	270,000	419,500	689,500	439,000
	<u>282,500</u>	<u>419,500</u>	<u>702,000</u>	<u>439,000</u>
Grants receivable for core activities				
Pears Foundation	250,000	75,000	325,000	300,000
The National Lottery Community Fund	-	255,500	255,500	-
The Dulverton Trust	-	35,000	35,000	35,000
Bradford Council	-	24,000	24,000	40,000
Sainsbury	20,000	-	20,000	-
Schroder	-	30,000	30,000	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	-	-	-	64,000
	<u>270,000</u>	<u>419,500</u>	<u>689,500</u>	<u>439,000</u>

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

4 Charitable activities

	Charitable Income 2025 £	Charitable Income 2024 £
Beyond the Gate	6,276	12,624
Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) formerly Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)	75,000	75,000
Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture	14,987	-
	<u>96,263</u>	<u>87,624</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	2,276	6,624
Restricted funds	93,987	81,000
	<u>96,263</u>	<u>87,624</u>

The Schools Linking Programme receives funding through MHCLG and Pears Foundation.

5 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Interest receivable	<u>24,933</u>	<u>14,832</u>

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

6 Charitable activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Staff costs	315,986	338,128
Programme costs	417,335	36,992
Sessional advisors	51,218	39,369
Promotional and website	3,162	2,476
	<u>787,701</u>	<u>416,965</u>
Share of support costs (see note 8)	23,328	19,847
Share of governance costs (see note 8)	4,356	3,960
	<u>815,385</u>	<u>440,772</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	208,112	71,720
Restricted funds	607,273	369,052
	<u>815,385</u>	<u>440,772</u>

Included in the Programme costs are capacity funds paid to Schools Linking Programmes listed in note 7.
Internal Linking Network costs are included in the project costs, amounting to £20,000.
Grant audit fees are included in programme costs £1,188 (2024 £1,080).

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

7 Capacity Funds

	2025	2024
	£	£
Faith & Belief Forum Birmingham	16,500	-
Blackburn with Darwen Council	16,500	-
Achievement, Cohesion & Integration Service, Bolton Council	16,500	-
Bridges for Communities, Bristol	16,500	-
Buckinghamshire County Council	16,500	-
Burnley & Pendle Faith Centre, Lancashire County Council	16,500	-
Fair Futures, Bury	16,500	-
Derby Open Centre	16,500	-
The Education People, Kent	16,500	-
Kirklees Council (Shape North)	16,500	7,000
Development Education Centre, Leeds	16,500	-
Project Free, Leicester	16,500	-
Faith & Belief forum, London	16,500	-
Hillborough Junior School, Luton	16,500	-
HOME, Manchester	16,500	-
Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle & Gateshead City Council	16,500	-
Oldham Gallery	16,500	-
Building Bridges Pendle	16,500	-
Derby Open Centre	-	7,000
Rochdale Borough Council	16,500	-
Rotherham Development Education Centre, South Yorkshire	16,500	-
Sheffield Development Education Centre, South Yorkshire	16,500	-
Ethnic Diversity Service, Stockport Council (Stockport)	16,500	-
Global Learning London, Tower Hamlets	16,500	-
	-	-
	<u>379,500</u>	<u>14,000</u>

Included in the programme costs are £379,500 of Linking Network Grants. In this tax year local areas received two rounds of grants due to the timing of funding to TLN. Round One payments were paid in April 2024 rather than March 2024.

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

8 Support costs

	Support costs	Governance costs	2025	Support costs	Governance costs	2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Phone and broadband	1,190	-	1,190	1,231	-	1,231
General office costs	4,378	-	4,378	4,719	-	4,719
IT	2,718	-	2,718	3,193	-	3,193
Insurance	1,672	-	1,672	1,673	-	1,673
Travel and subsistence	10,407	-	10,407	7,995	-	7,995
Bank charges	223	-	223	216	-	216
Legal and professional	2,740	-	2,740	820	-	820
Independent examination fees	-	4,356	4,356	-	3,960	3,960
	<u>23,328</u>	<u>4,356</u>	<u>27,684</u>	<u>19,847</u>	<u>3,960</u>	<u>23,807</u>
Analysed between Charitable activities	<u>23,328</u>	<u>4,356</u>	<u>27,684</u>	<u>19,847</u>	<u>3,960</u>	<u>23,807</u>

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

Bradford Council provide office space and training facilities as in kind support to the charity. Pears Foundation also provide support and training as in kind support to the charity. Local Authority and voluntary sector organisations leading the programme in their area and participating schools invest in their local programme costs. The value of these donations have not been included in the financial statements as a value cannot be reliably estimated for these donations.

Governance costs includes payments to the independent examiner of £4,356 for examination fees (2024-£3,960).

9 Trustees

One trustees of the charity received £712 remuneration for work done, (2024 £217, one trustee). One trustees received a total of £15 reimbursed for travel expenses, (2024 £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 2025

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
	9	9
Employment costs	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	269,955	295,501
Social security costs	18,264	23,375
Other pension costs	27,767	19,252
	315,986	338,128

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

	2025 £	2024 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	-	126,887
Prepayments and accrued income	2,254	3,744
	2,254	130,631

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	1,751	742
Grants committed not paid	55,500	-
Accruals and deferred income	5,543	5,042
	62,794	5,784

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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 2023	Movement in funds			Revaluations, gains and losses	Balance at 1 April 2024	Movement in funds			Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2025
	£	Incoming resources	Resources expended	£		£	Incoming resources	Resources expended	£		£
MHCLG	-	75,000	(75,000)	-	-	-	75,000	(75,000)	-	-	-
The UK Fund - Children's Impact on Cohesion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pears Foundation Core Schools Linking	275,000	250,000	(144,349)	-	380,651	-	255,500	(139,917)	(7,000)	108,583	-
Pears Foundation Matched Funding	15,627	-	(2,564)	-	13,063	-	75,000	(151,597)	-	304,054	-
Pears Additional Funding	-	50,000	-	-	50,000	-	-	(2,649)	-	10,414	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	-	64,000	-	-	64,000	-	-	(50,000)	-	-	-
The Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund	20,000	-	(20,000)	-	-	-	-	(64,000)	-	-	-
Bradford for Everyone, Bradford Council	122,101	-	(57,524)	-	64,577	-	-	(15,607)	-	48,970	-
The Duiverton Trust - Core Funding	-	35,000	-	-	35,000	-	35,000	(35,000)	-	35,000	-
Bradford Council Intergenerational Linking	-	20,000	(20,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Duiverton Trust - Rural Intergenerational Linking	23,615	-	(23,615)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bradford City of Culture 2025 - Intergenerational Play	-	-	-	-	-	-	14,987	(5,720)	-	9,267	-
Schroder	-	-	-	-	-	-	30,000	(27,270)	-	2,730	-
Bradford Schools Linking	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(9,955)	10,000	45	-
Bradford Council Living Well Social Action Project	-	20,000	(20,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Calderdale Schools Linking	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(9,870)	10,000	130	-
Bradford Council - Child Friendly Project	-	-	-	-	-	-	24,000	(16,688)	-	7,312	-
Beyond the School Gates Research Project	-	6,000	(6,000)	-	-	-	4,000	(4,000)	-	-	-

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

14	Restricted funds						(Continued)
		456,343	520,000	(369,052)	-	607,291	513,487
							(607,273)
							13,000
							526,505
	MHCLG provided grant funding for Schools Linking in a partnership between MHCLG and Pears Foundation. The UK Fund - Connected Communities, National Lottery: Living well together: Children and Young People contributing to social cohesion Pears Foundation - core Schools Linking Funding. Bradford City of Culture 2025 commissioned Intergenerational Play. Schroder Foundation grant for Bradford Intergenerational Linking. Dulverton Trust grant in 2023-24 for core funding for 2024-25 Bradford Council Child Friendly Project including pupil action for wellbeing. Beyond the School Gates - Research Project funded by British Academy and Nuffield Foundation.						
	Prior Year						
	MHCLG provided grant funding for Schools Linking in a partnership between MHCLG 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. Dulverton Trust grant for core funding in 2024-2025. Bradford Council - grant to develop Secondary Intergenerational Linking in Bradford. Bradford Council funded the living well and social action project. Beyond the School Gates – Research Project funded by British Academy and Nuffield Foundation.						

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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 2023	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2024	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
Intended contractual commitments	500,000	-	500,000	66,500	566,500
Schools Linking Programmes	14,000	(14,000)	-	-	-
	<u>514,000</u>	<u>(14,000)</u>	<u>500,000</u>	<u>66,500</u>	<u>566,500</u>

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

16	Funds	Balance at 1 April 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2024	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2025
		£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	General funds	45,140	21,456	(71,720)	14,000	8,876	309,709	(208,112)	(79,500)	30,973
	Designated funds	514,000	-	-	(14,000)	500,000	-	-	66,500	566,500
	Restricted funds	456,343	520,000	(369,052)	-	607,291	513,487	(607,273)	13,000	526,505
		1,015,483	541,456	440,772	-	1,116,167	823,196	(815,385)	-	1,123,978
17	Analysis of net assets between funds									
				Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Designated funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Designated funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
	Fund balances at 31 March 2025 are represented by:									
	Current assets/(liabilities)			30,973	566,500	526,505	1,123,978	8,876	500,000	1,116,167
				30,973	566,500	526,505	1,123,978	8,876	500,000	1,116,167

THE LINKING NETWORK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

18 Related party transactions

Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel is as follows.

	2025 £	2024 £
Aggregate compensation	128,778	125,287

Transactions with related parties

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

One Trustees were paid £712 during the year for work done (2024: £217, one trustee). This is allowed in the constitution and was agreed by the Trustees. Expenses of £15 were paid to one trustee during the year (2024 £nil).

19 Cash generated from operations

	2025 £	2024 £
Surplus for the year	7,811	100,684
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(24,933)	(14,832)
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease in debtors	128,377	151,606
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	57,010	(871)
Cash generated from operations	168,265	236,587