

Company registration number 08108086 (England and Wales)

**CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST**  
**(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

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# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

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### Members

J Lucy  
A Ashley  
T Harrop  
N Ankers  
A Canham  
P Woodhouse  
D Bingle

### Trustees

E Wright (Chair)  
C Jeffs (Vice Chair/Vice Chair of Resources Committee)  
A Brennan (Resigned 19 January 2025)  
J Sandford (Chair of Resources Committee)  
R Hughes  
J Olanipekun  
L Fletcher  
J Myers  
L Cowan (Chair of Standards and Curriculum Committee)

### Senior management team

- Chief Executive Officer & Accounting Officer	S Ellis
- Chief Finance & Operations Officer	L Jones
- School Improvement Director	K Doyle
- Governance Director	D Tomkinson
- Professional Learning Director	A Curran
- Headteacher Bexton Primary School	E Armstrong
- Headteacher Boughton Heath Academy	J Lenton
- Headteacher Gayton Primary School	J McAleny
- Headteacher Hebden Green Community School (1 April 2025)	H Ashley
- Headteacher Kelsall Primary School	S White
- Acting Headteacher Manor Park School and Nursery	S Jeffries
- Headteacher Mill View Primary School	A Gibbons
- Headteacher Woodchurch Road Academy	A Borril
- Headteacher Rock Ferry Primary School	S Radley
- Headteacher Over Hall Community School	C Edgeley
- Headteacher Woodfall Primary School and Nursery	H Hough

### Company registration number

08108086 (England and Wales)

### Principal and registered office

Cheshire Academies Trust  
Kelsall Primary School  
Flat Lane  
Kelsall  
Cheshire  
CW6 0PU

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

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### Academies operated

Bexton Primary School  
Boughton Heath Primary School  
Cheshire Leadership & Teaching Alliance  
Gayton Primary School  
Hebden Green Community School  
Kelsall Primary School  
Manor Park School & Nursery  
Mill View Primary School  
Over Hall Community School  
Rock Ferry Primary School  
Woodchurch Road Academy  
Woodfall Primary School and Nursery

### Location

Knutsford  
Chester  
Tarporley  
Heswall  
Winsford  
Tarporley  
Knutsford  
Chester  
Winsford  
Rock Ferry  
Woodchurch  
Neston

### Principal

E Armstrong  
J Lenton  
S White  
J McAleny  
H Ashley  
S White  
S Jeffries  
A Gibbons  
C Edgeley  
S Radley  
A Borrill  
H Hough

### Independent auditor

Mitchell Charlesworth (Audit) Limited  
24 Nicholas Street  
Chester  
CH1 2AU

### Bankers

Lloyds Bank PLC  
8 Foregate Street  
Chester  
CH1 1XP

### Solicitors

Browne Jacobson LLP  
3rd Floor, No. 1 Spinningfields  
1 Hardman Square  
Spinningfields  
Manchester  
M3 3EB

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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The trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditor's report of the charitable company for the year 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025. The annual report serves the purposes of both a trustees' report, and a directors' report and strategic report under company law.

The academy trust operates 10 primary academies in the North West of England. Hebden Green Community School (the Trust's first special academy) joined on 1 April 2025. The Trusts academies have a combined pupil capacity of 3,172 and had a roll of 3,003 in the school census on 15 May 2025.

Academy Name	Date Joined the Trust	PAN	NOR
Bexton Primary School	01.08.2019	495	501
Boughton Heath Academy	01.01.2015	210	226
Gayton Primary School	01.01.2023	230	219
Hebden Green Community School	01.04.2025	133	141
Kelsall Primary School	01.01.2015	248	245
Manor Park School	01.01.2021	360	257
Mill View Primary School	01.01.2015	236	246
Rock Ferry Primary School	01.01.2024	345	329
Over Hall Community School	01.05.2024	210	174
Woodchurch Road Academy	01.10.2023	210	186
Woodfall Primary School	01.06.2024	495	479

## Structure, governance and management

### Constitution

The Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents of the Academy Trust. The Trustees of Cheshire Academy Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law.

The charitable company operates as Cheshire Academy Trust (CAT).

The trustees of Cheshire Academies Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. Details of the trustees who served during the year, and to the date these financial statements are approved, are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 1.

### Members' liability

Each member of the charitable company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the charitable company in the event of it being wound up while they are a member, or within one year after they cease to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10, for the debts and liabilities contracted before they ceased to be a member.

### Trustees' indemnities

The Trust is a member of the DfE Risk Protection Arrangement, which provides cover for members, and Trustees from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Trust business.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Method of recruitment and appointment or election of trustees

The members of Cheshire Academies Trust are responsible for the appointment of the Trustees. Trustees can also appoint Trustees.

Under the Cheshire Academies Trust Scheme of Delegation, Trustees may serve a maximum of two terms of office (each term being four years). The priority for this year has to be ensure that there is a succession plan in place for the role of Chair of the Trust Board. Emlyn Wright (EW) was appointed as Chair of the Trust Board in the autumn term (October 2024). EW has significant educational and governance experience and has also undertaken the National Governance Association's Chairs' Development course.

The Trust board have discussed the importance of further recruitment of Trustees with experience in law, finance and HR as the terms of office of a number of existing Trustees come to an end. Trustee recruitment has been a priority in 2024-25. It has also been recognised that there is significant knowledge and governance experience in local governing bodies. A governance succession plan has been created in which local governors can express an interest in utilising their governance knowledge in another school, on the trust board or as a Member. Trustees are aware of the importance of stakeholder engagement and in 2025-26 will be actively seeking applications from parents at Hebden Green Community school to enhance knowledge of the special school sector at trust board level.

There are currently seven members of Cheshire Academies Trust with experience in governance, education leadership and HR. The number of members exceeds the minimum number required under the Academies Trust Handbook and the Department for Education's preference for multi-academy Trusts to have at least five members.

#### Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees

Trustees are provided with information relating to the Trust and its academies, highlighting administrative requirements such as the need to complete a DBS check, that information needs to be recorded on Get Information about Schools (GIAS) and Companies House, declaration of interests and related-party transactions and the requirement to complete safeguarding training on appointment and annually thereafter.

Internal induction training includes information on general governance matters such as the importance of acting in accordance with the Nolan Principles, the strategic nature of the role and Trust specific updates such as the Cheshire Academies Trust governance structure, the Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation.

There is an annual programme of trustee visits to trust academies which provide an informal mechanism for trustees to meet with headteachers and to get a greater understanding of the context of the academy.

Trustees have access to the Cheshire Academies Trust internal programme of governance training as well as online training through the National Governance Association's Learning Link.

#### Organisational structure

The structure of the Trust consists of two levels; the Trustees and executive leadership team. The aim of the management structure is to devolve responsibility and encourage involvement in decision making at all levels. The Chief Executive Officer is the Trust's Accounting Officer.

The Trust Board provides:

- strategic leadership of the academy trust - the board defines the trust vision for high quality and inclusive education in line with its charitable objects. It establishes and fosters the trust's culture and sets and champions the trust strategy including determining what, if any, governance functions are delegated to the local tier.
- accountability and assurance - the board has robust effective oversight of the operations and performance of the academy trust, including the provision of education, pupil welfare, overseeing and ensuring appropriate use of funding and effective financial performance and keeping their estate safe and well-maintained.
- engagement - the board has strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders. The board involves parents, schools and communities so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### ***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025***

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The Trust's executive leadership team is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Finance & Operations Officer (CFOO), and the School Improvement Director. Each academy Headteacher and deputy Headteacher form part of the wider Trust Senior Leadership Team (SLT). These leaders control the Trust at an executive level and, in the case of the Headteachers at individual academies. They implement the policies set down by the Trustees and are accountable to them for the performance of each school.

The CEO leads the Trust executive leadership team and is held accountable by the board for the performance of the academies.

The Board has two committees through which it delegates its duties. The resources committee met in October, November, March and June. The standards committee met in September, February and June. Meetings took place remotely.

The Trust employs a Governance Director and a clerk to governors. The Governance Director is the clerk to the Trust Board.

Both are highly skilled and experienced. In 2024-2025, LGB meetings at Manor Park, Woodfall, Boughton Heath, Mill View and Kelsall were clerked by an external governance professional whose services are engaged on an annual, contractual basis.

Day to day responsibility for the individual academies is devolved to LGBs in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation. All LGBs with the exception of Hebden Green operate a flat structure which requires all governors to attend all meetings. The business to be transacted at each meeting is contained within the annual planner which is reviewed at least annually.

Due to the complex nature of a special school, there remains a committee structure at Hebden Green. There are three committees (safeguarding attendance and behaviour, finance and resources and quality of education and personal development).

During the year, the chair of the board met with academy chairs through attendance at the termly chairs' and SEND and safeguarding link trustees met with link governors at link governance hubs. The CFOO and academy business managers attended LGB meetings regularly throughout the year.

#### **Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel**

The pay and remuneration for the executive team is decided by the Trust board's Pay Committee on recommendation from appraisal panels that includes representatives from the board of Trustees and external advisors. Additionally, they consider relevant pay benchmarking data, sourced from an external provider.

The pay and remuneration for academy Headteachers is decided by the Trust Board's Pay Committee on recommendation from the appraisal panel that includes the CEO and the LGB chair.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Trade union facility time

##### *Relevant union officials*

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	1
Full-time equivalent employee number	-

##### *Percentage of time spent on facility time*

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	-
1%-50%	1
51%-99%	-
100%	-

##### *Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time*

Total cost of facility time	1
Total pay bill	16,730
Percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time	-

##### *Paid trade union activities*

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours	-
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#### Engagement with employees

The Trust places great emphasis on engaging with employees to ensure a cohesive and supportive working environment. We continue to conduct comprehensive staff surveys in collaboration with Edurio, gathering valuable feedback on employee satisfaction and areas for improvement.

In 2024-2025, in response to Edurio outcomes, there was a Trust-wide focus on workload reductions for all staff. The trust conducted interviews and discussions at each school, including primary headteachers, classroom teachers, teaching assistants (TAs), Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), administrative staff, and central Trust staff. The evidence from our staff consultations aligns generally with national findings: in recent years a great deal of unnecessary or excessive workload has been successfully reduced (especially for teachers in planning and assessment), yet other areas need continued attention. The Trust has outlined nine themes – curriculum planning, marking, data, SEND, support staff, communication, technology, subject leadership, and admin workload – which we will continue to work on so we can create a more sustainable and positive working environment across our Trust.

To maintain ongoing communication and share best practices, the CEO issues weekly messages to staff across the Trust, highlighting achievements and innovative work from different schools. Communication between academy senior leaders and the central Trust takes place on a more regular basis via a variety of mediums. The Trusts' HR system further extends opportunities for staff communication. This multi-faceted approach ensures that staff remain informed, involved, and connected to the Trust's strategic goals.

The Trust employs a number of disabled colleagues and, where relevant, takes into account their personal circumstances to ensure appropriate training, development and advanced employment opportunities are available to them to reach their full potential. Applications for employment by disabled persons are always fully considered, bearing in mind the aptitudes of the applicant concerned.

It is the Trust's policy to positively advantage any disabled persons to ensure that their training, career development and promotion is as far as possible, identical to that of other employees.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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The Trust also engaged with a number of Trade Unions during the year holding two Joint Consultative and Negotiation (JCNC) meetings in the year. Together with union colleagues the Trust reviewed a number of HR policies and discussed wider issues impacting employees.

#### **Engagement with suppliers, customers and others in a business relationship with the academy trust**

We use a range of suppliers for the delivery of services across the organisation. Where it makes sense to do so, we share services and systems for economies of scale.

#### **Related parties and other connected charities and organisations**

##### **Cheshire Leadership and Teaching Alliance (CLTA)**

CLTA is a former teaching school that was decommissioned in March 2021. The Trust has continued to operate CLTA as a vehicle to provide high quality training and professional development for colleagues in Trust academies and a wide network of school partners. CLTA is a strategic partner of the Cheshire Teaching School Hub and the University of Chester. CLTA aims to contribute to the raising of standards through school-to-school support in schools across the northwest.

##### **School Led Initial Teacher Training**

CLTA continue to work in partnership with the University of Chester to deliver their School Led ITT Programme, along with 11 partner schools across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and North Wales. In 2024/25 36 face to face training days were delivered at CAT HQ by outstanding practitioners. The University delivered the PGCE element. 12 Associate Teachers (ATs) completed the programme in June 2025, all of who have gone on to work in Primary School education.

##### **Early Career Framework**

CLTA facilitates this training on behalf of the Best Practice Network and the Cheshire Teaching School Hub to ECTs from across Cheshire West Primary Schools. The programme supports Early Career Teachers (ECT's) to develop the skills and confidence needed to flourish in the classroom. Designed to follow seamlessly from Initial Teacher Education, the two year fully funded induction programme gives ECTs structured support based on the Early Career Framework and additionally provides for the training of in-school mentors. Delivery is a blend of remote and face-to-face training each half term for two years.

In 2024-2025, CLTA delivered training to 36 newly qualified ECTs and mentors in their first year and 30 ECTs and mentors in their second year. Jess Thomson, Mill View Primary, facilitated the first year's training and Steve Meredith, CLTA's QA Lead Mentor, facilitated the second-year's training. Feedback on both facilitators was excellent.

##### **Professional Development**

CLTA, working alongside the CAT SEND Hub anchored by Hebden Green, delivered a mixed-mode professional learning programme spanning expert deployment, webinars, live training, professional networks, leadership development, NPQs, peer/SEND reviews and community links. Across the year, CLTA trained 70 teachers from 50 schools across Cheshire West, Cheshire East, Wirral, Halton, Warrington, Wigan, Stockport and St Helens, alongside a comprehensive internal offer for CAT colleagues. Delivery blended in-school residencies and central hub days with live and recorded online sessions, ensuring access and permanence through a growing on-demand library.

##### **Trust Subject Leads**

TSLs continued to lead cross-trust collaboration and raise subject quality in Writing, Reading, Maths, SEND, EYFS, Humanities, Computing and PE, with new provision launched in DT and Science. Sessions combined live webinars and pre-recorded modules; all were recorded to create an accessible knowledge bank. This ensured colleagues stayed current with pedagogy and subject knowledge while driving consistency of practice.

##### **Core CLTA delivery**

Programmes facilitated by A. Curran (Professional Learning Director) included *Learning Without Limits* (12 sessions / 3 cohorts, including leaders from 6 external schools), the *Disadvantaged Network / MITA* (6 sessions / 2 cohorts across 9 CAT schools), and the *Curriculum Leaders Network* (termly). D. Lamb (SEND Director) delivered four half-day CPD sessions for SENCOs, with shared resources and follow-up clinics. Additional live training covered behaviour for learning, safeguarding/SEND induction and adaptive teaching, complemented by recorded webinars on assessment, curriculum, reading, safeguarding, inclusion, workload/CPD and subject leadership. Professional Learning Networks ran across writing, teaching & learning, early reading/phonics, SEND and EDI, with targeted leadership training aligned to CAT career pathways. Peer and SEND Reviews provided full-cycle evaluation with coaching and action planning.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### **CAT SEND Hub offer**

The Hub provides a structured pathway for SENCOs, teachers, teaching assistants/inclusion teams, leaders/governors and pastoral/attendance/safeguarding staff. Core modules span: Graduated Response and EHCP quality; Assess–Plan–Do–Review and impact evidence; communication & interaction (ASC/ADHD/SLCN); cognition & learning (literacy/numeracy interventions, dyslexia/dyscalculia approaches); SEMH and trauma-informed practice; sensory processing and environmental adaptation; assistive technology and inclusive EdTech; attendance strategies for pupils with SEND; reasonable adjustments, accessibility plans and statutory compliance; SEND funding and deployment. The SEND Hub also runs a termly SENCO Network, bookable specialist clinics (SLCN, ASC/ADHD, SEMH, sensory/OT-informed practice, assistive tech), in-school residencies and peer/SEND reviews.

#### **Inspiring Leadership**

CLTA funded all CAT Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers to attend the Inspiring Leadership conference, supporting collaborative reflection beyond school settings. 27 CAT colleagues attended in June 2025.

#### **NPQ Professional Qualifications**

As a strategic partner of the Cheshire Teaching School Hub and delivery partner for Best Practice Network, CLTA delivered DfE-accredited NPQs through blended online and face-to-face learning. In 2024/25, CLTA delivered the new NPQ-SEN to 80 delegates across 4 cohorts, with face-to-face components facilitated by senior leaders from Hebden Green School and Manor Park Primary School at the CLTA Training Suite.

#### **Impact summary**

The combined CLTA and SEND Hub offer broadened regional reach, strengthened leadership pipelines, improved the consistency of classroom and SEND practice, and established a sustainable PD infrastructure (live + recorded + residency + review). The expanding recorded library, structured networks and review cycles are embedding continuous improvement, while NPQSEND delivery and targeted SENCO development are raising capability for inclusive education across CAT and partner schools.

#### **Apprenticeships**

In April 2025 the Trust partnered with Lift Schools and the Lift Apprenticeship scheme was launched. 20 staff across 6 Trust schools have signed up to these fully funded programmes, which include:-

- Business Administrator Level 3
- Early Years Educator Level 3
- Level 2 EYFS
- Wellbeing Champion L3
- Business support L3 or 4
- Specialist Teaching Assistant Level 5
- Safeguarding Support Officer L3
- School Business pro L4

CLTA works closely with the Central Resource Team to promote and monitor the programmes.

#### **School to School support**

CLTA's Operations Director works closely with Kate Doyle, School Improvement Director, to coordinate the deployment of the newly appointed Expert Teacher Leaders to schools requiring specialised support.



## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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### Objectives and activities

#### Objects and aims

The Trust's object is to be the catalyst for a better education so children can contribute to a better world. We do this where it is hardest, so we make the biggest difference for the children who need it most. For the public benefit we educate children aged 2–11 in our primary schools and 2–19 in our special school, establishing, maintaining and developing academies that deliver an inclusive, high-ambition curriculum and the wrap-around support that removes barriers to learning.

We direct people, time and resources first to vulnerability—pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, those facing safeguarding, attendance or social care challenges—so that equity drives excellence. We do this through care, collaboration and creativity: evidence-informed teaching, strong multi-agency partnerships, targeted interventions, and professional learning that builds collective efficacy across the Trust.

We hold ourselves to account for improved outcomes, sustained attendance, strong moral purpose and flourishing wellbeing. By acting as One Trust, we raise and exceed expectations for every child—especially in the most challenging contexts—so that aspiration is matched by achievement and no child's postcode or circumstance limits their future.

#### Care – A higher standard - our lens; our barometer

We use extremely careful approaches to ask challenging questions about our provision; why is that there? Who is it for? Does that work? It is vital we seek to better understand our schools, by assuming less and enquiring more; investigating, understanding and explaining how provision links to learning, links to progress, links to outcomes, and raises standards within our unique academies. We will seek the truth behind the outcome, match this with what we see within practice to identify and share excellence across the Trust. We will equally seek trails for those areas, in each academy, that do not serve our children well, repairing systems and structures with a laser like attention to detail alongside our leaders who share the same values. We have examples of excellence in all areas somewhere in the Trust; in order to secure a great education for all children it needs to cease to matter where, by who, or how, you are educated within the Trust. We care about excellence for all.

Our lens for disadvantaged and SEND allow us to see a truth about the effectiveness of our provision. It is through these that we will judge our impact, our capability, and our capacity to make a difference, beyond that which may be attributed to advantage or need. It is for this reason that we choose disadvantage and SEND over other groups, because these are our litmus test; the indication that we are moving the dial. We will continue to accelerate the strategies to secure greater impact and improvement that better serves all learners. We will actively preference and privilege disadvantage and SEND, seeking greater equity and more effective, inclusive provision.

Ultimately the attainment, progress and attendance of disadvantaged and SEND children is the key measure for Cheshire Academies Trust and each academy; as an indicator of the effectiveness of provision for those who most need it.

#### Collaboration – Deep Investment in what matters

We know that what all children need, particularly now, is Expert Teaching; this is what really matters. The quality of the educational provision secured through outstanding professional development will raise standards across the Trust. We also know that all pupils thrive when teaching is effective; it is evident in our own and global research. We invest deeply in our staff and collaborate widely, so that teachers have the opportunities to learn from our best innovators and educators but from outside our Trust as well. We will have stronger preferences and opinions on the teaching and pedagogy that matters, particularly for those presently experiencing disadvantaged based on the latest educational research. Empowering, recognising and publishing those ideas that make a difference to all pupils so that we can all learn what works. We will speak the language of Expert Teaching (based on the 7C model) and create the conditions for success so colleagues can develop professionally.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### **Creativity – Powering free thinking leadership**

Leadership is the enabler that will improve standards and create the conditions for expert teachers to thrive. The decisions we make as leaders determine the standards we drive and that which we accept. The quality of our senior teams through to middle and subject leadership determine and are responsible for the quality of provision across each academy. The maturity of CAT and the experience and expertise of our leaders should be having greater impact on the quality of provision and be securing a better education for our pupils. We will continue to build effective leadership at all levels supported through system leadership programmes, knowledge hubs as well as research and development units. We are seeking to build leadership capacity thereby increasing unity and autonomy. Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment continue to be our focus, particular to ensure the intent, implementation and impact is secure; the connection between and development of these is what delivers excellence.

#### **Objectives, strategies and activities**

During 2024-2025 the Trust has deepened it's use of the Strategic Quality Management (SQM) methodology across all central operations and Trust academies. The Trust's statement of intent in 2024-2025 was to build a strong trust affirming our values and vision by:

- creating a culture of continuous improvement in our schools through self-evaluation, challenge, support and appropriate action.
- maintaining a motivating and ambitious school experience for all, including disadvantaged children and children with SEND, so that pupils can achieve their full potential.
- creating a high-performing working culture that promotes collaboration, aspiration and support.
- utilising and deploying effective and efficient use of resources for the benefit of all schools in the trust.

In order to raise the overall quality of education in CAT schools ensuring equality and excellence for everyone.

#### **Critical Success Factors**

	Strategy	Area	CSF Description.
CSF 1	All	Professional Learning and Communication	We need to disseminate existing knowledge to all levels of the Trust.
CSF 2	School Improvement	Safeguarding	We need to eliminate any weaknesses in child protection practice.
CSF 3	Workforce Strategy	Succession and Talent Mapping	We need to identify and retain talented staff.
CSF 4	School Improvement	High Quality Inclusive Education	We need a school improvement strategy that builds high quality inclusive education.
CSF 5	Resource Strategy	Financial and HR management	We need an effective resource strategy that provides financial sustainability.
CSF 6	Governance	Leadership and Management	We need leaders to be held accountable and supported by strong governance.
CSF 7	All / Purpose	Vision/Wellbeing	We need inspired and motivated staff in order to ensure they thrive.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025***

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### **Objectives**

- We will conduct a review of the workloads of all staff positions across the central Trust and within individual schools to ensure a better work-life balance for employees by August 2025.
- We will implement a workforce strategy to strengthen talent and succession planning elements, ensuring long-term organisational sustainability as Year 1 of a wider workforce strategy.
- We will implement a communications strategy to establish effective channels between the central team and all staffing levels within the Trust.
- Design coherence between Trust strategies to ensure effective cross strategy working and efficiency including KPIs and verifiers.
- Design and implement a new SEND hub which builds a consistent centralised frameworks in order to support those Trust primaries with regard to SEND curricular, assessment and CPD.
- Create, implement and test a comprehensive Trust safeguarding framework to ensure that the Trust and individual schools meet their statutory duties and comply with annual government regulations.
- Convert Hebden Green Special School and implement a formal induction process by August 2025.
- We will review the appraisal systems for teachers and support staff in order to enhance the consistency of experience, ensuring alignment and focusing on professional growth which is self-directed.

### **Public benefit**

In setting our objectives and planning our activities, the trustees have carefully considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Activities in 2024-25 demonstrate in all accepted definitions, that the Trust provides services that are of public benefit through the provision of education and making available the facilities and resources of the school for the community and other charitable purposes.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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### Strategic report

#### Achievements and performance

Over the past year the Trust has deepened its One Trust culture and delivered measurable improvements in education, workforce and operations, underpinned by clear strategy and disciplined implementation. The Learning without Limits and Expert Teaching frameworks now anchor classroom practice across schools, focusing professional development on child-engaged assessment, deeper instruction and the habits of expert teachers. Close-to-practice guidance has helped leaders translate high-quality research into daily teaching that raises attainment and nurtures character.

Quality assurance has matured through a coherent improvement cycle, trust-wide moderation and data-informed reviews. Schools are working to common assessment expectations with a shared “single version of the truth” through intelligent dashboards, surfacing variation early and acting quickly. This has sharpened the link between need, cost and impact, enabling targeted support that moves outcomes most—particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

External assurance remains strong. Recent inspections have secured multiple Good and Outstanding outcomes, and sector performance tables continue to recognise the Trust’s consistency across schools with different starting points. Operational readiness for new schools and changing contexts has also improved, with strong internal systems and onboarding routines that protect quality and culture during growth.

Strategically, the Trust has implemented major elements of its Growth and Optimisation Plan, preparing to scale through a hub model while maintaining standards. Capacity has been intentionally built ahead of demand, centrally and in “capacity-giver” schools, so support can be deployed at pace to stabilise, repair and develop both new and existing academies.

Resourcing and operations are a visible engine for equity and excellence. The Resource & Operations approach sets central standards with local delivery—keeping money close to pupils, aligning budgets to curriculum intent, and using ethical procurement to secure value without compromising quality. Efficient financial closes, disciplined forecasting and reporting provide assurance that every pound is turned towards the classroom and that impact can be evidenced. Modern tools for purchasing, finance and intelligent forecasting are reducing workload and error, while the roadmap prioritises cyber resilience, rapid onboarding of new schools and expanded analytics (including correlations across attendance, finance and achievement) to inform timely decisions.

The Annual Trust Investment with a clear, published offer spanning school improvement, governance, SEND, IT and audit. A categorisation model ties support and freedoms to risk, ensuring proportionate intervention and clarity of accountability. Estates planning is sequenced by safety, compliance and educational impact; health and safety and data protection standards are embedded and quality-assured.

Professional communities continue to expand. Trust subject networks, leadership development and staff voice have created a constructive working environment in which people feel valued and policy is co-produced from the ground up, reflecting the uniqueness of each school while holding to common standards. Strong signs of improvement in our first sponsored school further demonstrate the Trust’s ability to stabilise provision and build momentum.

In conclusion, during 2024-2025, the Trust has moved from strong intent to repeatable delivery: a coherent education model; a values-led resource engine; a scalable digital core; and an enabling workforce culture—each reinforcing the others. This integrated approach is accelerating improvement, safeguarding standards through growth and positioning the Trust for the next phase with excellence, equity and community impact at its heart.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

	BPS	BHA	GPS	KPS	MPS	MVPS	OHCS	RFPS	WPS	WRA	CAT
<b>GLD percentage</b>	87%	83%	85%	89%	63%	77%	74%	43%	73%	50%	<b>72%</b>
<b>Phonics percentage</b>	87%	97%	97%	97%	97%	90%	71%	68%	84%	68%	<b>86%</b>
<b>KS1 RWM Combined</b>	80%	73%	62%	71%	42%	72%	69%	34%	64%	38%	<b>61%</b>
<b>RWM Combined</b>	82%	88%	82%	68%	63%	90%	38%	30%	81%	67%	<b>69%</b>
<b>RWM Combined GDS</b>	23%	18%	21%	5%	13%	27%	0%	0%	21%	2%	<b>13%</b>

#### Bexton Primary School

Bexton Primary School, located in Knutsford, is a two-form entry school that joined the Trust in August 2019. The school operates a large nursery and offers out-of-hours provision. It is a popular school with low pupil mobility. While the proportion of pupils receiving SEN (Special Educational Needs) support is below the national average, the percentage of children with a Statement or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan is in the highest quintile nationally. The school also houses a 10-place Resourced Provision for children with complex needs.

Over the past five years, end-of-Key Stage 2 (KS2) attainment in reading, writing and maths has been significantly above the national average, placing the school in the top 2% of schools nationally. Progress has also consistently exceeded national figures. In 2025, end-of-Key Stage 2 outcomes were as follows: Reading – 93% at the Expected standard and 50% at Greater Depth; Writing – 92% at the Expected standard and 37% at Greater Depth; and Maths – 88% at the Expected standard and 53% at Greater Depth. Attendance remains strong, averaging 96.5% for the 2025–26 academic year.

In 2024–25, Bexton was awarded CIF (Condition Improvement Fund) funding for electrical remediation works across the school, which will be completed during the autumn and spring terms of this academic year. However, the school was unsuccessful in its CIF bid for a replacement boiler and heating system, which remains a pressing priority.

Long-standing plans for a new multi-purpose building will also progress this academic year. This facility will enhance curriculum opportunities and provide additional space for the school's expanding wraparound care provision. Further capital projects delivered during the year include the continuation of the teacher laptop replacement programme, improvements to the astro turf (funded by the PTA), the installation of interactive whiteboards in junior classrooms and cyclical maintenance works to the Year 2 and nursery classrooms.

#### Boughton Heath Academy

Boughton Heath, a founding member of Cheshire Academies Trust, is a single form entry primary school in the Great Boughton area of Chester. The school is incredibly popular and frequently oversubscribed, prompting an increase in its Published Admission Number (PAN) to 34 in junior classes in recent years. Currently there are 225 pupils on roll, significantly above the usual PAN of 210. In July 2024, Ofsted had awarded an 'outstanding' judgment in every area, with the lead inspector calling Boughton Heath an "exceptional school."

Despite these numbers, academic excellence remains a hallmark, with all statutory data consistently above the national average - significantly so in many metrics. The most recent KS2 data saw combined attainment in reading, writing and maths at the expected standard at 88% and at the higher standard at 18%, placing school in the top 3% of national schools. This was the highest combined attainment measure for school since before the pandemic. Elsewhere, reading attainment at the end of KS2 was exceptional, with 91% of children achieving the expected standard of higher, and 50% achieving the higher standard.

School's demographic has changed significantly over the last five years, with a notable increase in the number of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Due to the increase of places in KS2, pupil mobility stands at 88% as new children join, and in the early days of the 2025 - 26 academic year school has already seen 4 extra pupils admitted. As is the national picture, we also see substantial increases in the level of SEND, both in terms of number and area of need; and school has overhauled its environment, approach and ethos to respond to this.

Looking ahead, a major focus this year is to deliver the high expectations and outstanding results school is known for; whilst embedding innovative use of technology and AI. We aspire to further ignite children's love of and engagement with their learning through digital platforms, with the aim of pioneering these approaches throughout wider Trust schools also.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### **Gayton Primary School**

Gayton Primary School formally joined Cheshire Academies Trust on 1st January 2023, having worked in partnership with the trust for several years beforehand. As a single-form entry primary school in Heswall, Gayton was the first school in Wirral to join the trust.

Since academisation, the school has benefited from significant investment, including a successful CIF bid which enabled a full roof replacement in the 2024–25 academic year. Educational outcomes have shown a strong upward trajectory. Attainment in reading, writing and maths combined has improved year on year, with 82% of pupils achieving the expected standard in 2025. Outcomes at greater depth are particularly strong and well above national averages.

The curriculum continues to be strengthened, rooted in Gayton's three drivers: Personal Development, Democracy, and the Environment. Ongoing development is supported through the implementation of SQM projects, ensuring that provision remains ambitious, broad, and well aligned with trust values.

#### **Hebden Green Community School**

Hebden Green Community School is located in Winsford, Cheshire, providing education for children and young people aged 2–19 with complex physical, medical, sensory and learning needs from across the authority and beyond. The school offers a holistic and highly personalised curriculum that blends teaching, therapy and care, enabling every pupil to access learning, achieve, and thrive.

Its core values of *Love, Learning and Individuality* underpin every aspect of school life, creating a nurturing and inclusive community. The vision at Hebden Green is to equip pupils with the skills, confidence and independence they need for life beyond school. Pupils are supported to value themselves and others, develop strong communication and social skills, and engage with a broad, ambitious curriculum. Learning is practical, relevant and designed to prepare each individual for adulthood, ensuring that progress extends well beyond the classroom.

Hebden Green has been consistently recognised by Ofsted for its outstanding provision and leadership over the past 20 years. It is a school of choice for families from across the country, well-regarded within Cheshire West and Chester, and is now at the forefront of leading SEND practice across the Trust. As the driving force behind the development of the Trust's SEND Hub, the school is shaping regional and national practice, demonstrating excellence, innovation and collaboration across the sector.

At Hebden Green, academic achievement is complemented by a strong focus on personal development, well-being and belonging. Through close partnerships with families and a multi-disciplinary team of professionals, every pupil is safe, respected and supported to achieve their full potential. Pupils leave Hebden Green with pride in their achievements and the foundations for future success in education, employment and life.

#### **Kelsall Primary School and Nursery**

Kelsall Primary School and Nursery is a thriving, high-performing single-form entry school with a well-attended nursery, located just outside Chester. Outcomes are strong, with pupils achieving well across all phases and disadvantaged groups making positive progress. Whole-school attendance improved slightly to 95.7% in the past year but reducing the gap in attendance for disadvantaged and SEND pupils remains a priority.

The curriculum continues to be shaped by Expeditionary Learning, ensuring depth of knowledge, high-quality work, and character development. This is underpinned by the robust use of School Quality Measures (SQM). Key SQM priorities for 2024–25 included:

- Strengthening mathematics and combined attainment.
- Sustaining gains in Early Years and KS1 progression.
- Narrowing attendance gaps for disadvantaged and SEND pupils.
- Embedding depth and quality through Expeditionary Learning.

Strategically, the school has also been successful in securing a £1m CIF bid to install a carbon-neutral heating system, due to begin in the coming year—demonstrating a forward-looking commitment to sustainability.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Key performance indicators

##### Manor Park School and Nursery

Manor Park School and Nursery is a single form entry primary school located in Knutsford. Manor Park continues to thrive within the Trust, which it joined on 1st January 2021. The school boasts generous outdoor facilities, including a woodland area, and operates a popular nursery for children from the age of two. Following its Ofsted inspection in July 2023, the school proudly retained its 'Good' grading, reflecting the dedication to high standards.

Despite lower-than-national attainment levels on entry, Manor Park has over time demonstrated strong pupil progress. In 2024-2025, KS2 outcomes were slightly down on previous years in Writing and Maths, where attainment was just below the national average. In Reading, attainment in school was higher than the national average. The school's inclusive environment supports a higher-than-average proportion of disadvantaged (PP) and SEND pupils, as well as a significantly mobile population, ensuring all students receive the tailored support they need to succeed.

In 2024-2025 the school invested to repurpose an unused classroom to create an art and design studio, which has already impacted positively on the quality of work produced by pupils in these two subjects.

The Trust employed an acting headteacher throughout the academic year 2024-2025 (the school's substantive Deputy Headteacher), whilst the recruitment process for a permanent headteacher was undertaken. This ensured the consistent running of the school in line with the school's existing culture and values.

Since September 2025, the school has had a PAN of 30, having previously been a 1.5 form entry school. This change has enabled a more strategic approach to ongoing school developments.

##### Mill View Primary School & Nursery

Mill View continues to be a popular, vibrant, and welcoming school at the heart of the Upton community. The school delivers strong academic outcomes, with children achieving well above national averages in core subjects at both KS1 and KS2, while providing a rich, broad curriculum that nurtures creativity, curiosity, and personal growth.

This year brought changes to the leadership team, with the appointment of a new Headteacher, Deputy Head, and SENCO during the autumn term. The team is committed to building on the school's strengths and continuing to provide a learning environment where every child feels valued, inspired, and supported to thrive.

The school is a beacon for writing, working in partnership with schools across the country to share best practice and support curriculum development. Many staff members also contribute to wider CPD and school improvement work across the Trust and the local authority, helping to support colleagues and raise standards in a range of settings.

##### Over Hall Community School

Over Hall is a one-form entry school in Winsford, Cheshire West with 184 children currently on roll. Previously a single academy, Over Hall joined Cheshire Academies Trust on 1st May 2024. Children commence their learning journey at Over Hall in reception since there isn't currently a nursery provision. There is an independent nursery on site, which the majority of children join Over Hall from. On entry, pupil's attainment at Over Hall is significantly lower than National, however, due to a robust start, progress tends to be strong by the end of Key Stage 2 with performance broadly in line with National in most areas, although the data in 2025 shows a decline in children achieving the RWM combined.

Over Hall sits in an area of Cheshire that is identified in the IDACI as high deprivation. Regardless of the contextual challenges, high expectations, strong values and a supportive ethos ensure that effective teaching and learning remains a key focus. This year, a member of staff has completed training to be a trauma informed lead, which will continue to ensure staff receive the most effective CPD to meet the needs of children at Over Hall. Despite lower pupil numbers in some Key Stage 2 classes and a national low birth rate, Key Stage 1 and reception have continued to have a good intake with 29 children in each class.

There have been a number of staffing changes at Over Hall in the last year including the appointment a new Headteacher who commenced her new role on 1st September 2025.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### **Rock Ferry Primary School**

RFPS Primary School is a 1.5 form entry primary school in Rock Ferry, Birkenhead. They became part of the Trust in January 2024 having worked informally with them for over a year. Rock Ferry operates a 25-place nursery class and offers an externally operated out of hours provision.

Rock Ferry is a popular school based in an area of high social deprivation. The proportion of pupils with SEN support is significantly higher than national, as is the number of pupils classed as disadvantaged (67%). Rock Ferry prides itself on being a beacon for trauma informed practice and are the only school in the region to hold the nationally recognised Attachment and Trauma Sensitive School award at Gold level. A strong emphasis is placed on both physical and mental health.

A new Chair of Governors and Deputy Headteacher have both been appointed at the start of September 2025.

In 2025 Rock Ferry were unsuccessful in obtaining CIF funding for a phase 1 roof replacement project.

#### **Woodchurch Road Academy**

Woodchurch Road Academy is a one-form entry primary school in Birkenhead. The school joined the Trust as its first sponsor academy on 1st October 2023, following two successive 'requires improvement' judgements.

Over the past academic year, pupil numbers have fallen significantly, creating a challenging financial context. Despite this, the school remains financially stable due to robust management and sustained Trust support. The Trust has secured two additional CIF bids for essential electrical and heating works, alongside a wraparound care grant and a nursery grant of £150,000, during the financial year. This brings the total value of grants secured for Woodchurch Road to £2.2 million in the past two years.

Academic outcomes at the end of the summer term remained strong, and the school continues to make progress in line with expectations despite financial and demographic pressures.

#### **Woodfall Primary School & Nursery**

Woodfall Primary and Nursery School is a two-form entry primary school in Little Neston, Cheshire. Woodfall became part of the Trust on 1st June 2024. The school operates a nursery provision for 2 and 3 year olds and an out of hours provision.

Woodfall is a large school with low mobility but a very low birth rate in the current Year 3 year group which has affected all schools in the local area. The proportion of pupils with SEN support is higher than national and the proportion of children with a statement or EHC Plan is in the highest quintile nationally. Woodfall had a 25 place Resourced Provision for children with complex needs which was hitherto funded by the LA; the funding ended in 2013 but the school has retained the model as it serves SEND children so well.

In 2023 the school funded its own replacement Nursery building. The enhancement of the EYFS outdoor areas is still a school priority for us. The Trust secured CIF funding for roof replacement which completed in spring 2025 the school is awaiting an electrical rewire as a result of a second successful CIF bid.

Following a Peer Review and SEND Review with the Trust in 2024-2025, the school achieved Outstanding for Behaviour and Outstanding EYFS provision and Good for Personal Development, Quality of Education and Leadership and Management in their most recent Ofsted inspection in June 2025. Highlights from the report include:

- "Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and our Early Years provision is outstanding." – Ofsted 2025
- "Woodfall is a warm, ambitious and nurturing school where children thrive." – Ofsted 2025
- "Children develop confidence, resilience and respect – a true reflection of Outstanding provision." – Ofsted 2025

The school appointed a new Deputy Headteacher in June 2025. The school is delighted with the direction they are moving in since joining CAT. Strategic planning remains focused on delivering high-quality teaching, inclusive practice, and meaningful opportunities for every child.



# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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### Key Performance Indicators

#### Education

##### Headline Metrics

KPI 3	KPI 5	KPI 18	KPI 21	KPI 24
Percentage of Good+ Schools	Trust Attendance Percentage	Parental General Satisfaction	KS2 RWM %	KS2 Disadvantaged Gap
90%	95%	81%	69%	-23%

#### Workforce

##### Headline Metrics

KPI 28	KPI 40	KPI 48	KPI 49	KPI 50
Annual Days Lost per Teacher	Non-Quorate LGB Meetings	Staff general Job Satisfaction	Leaders General Job Satisfaction	Total Number of Staff Accessing CLTA CPD
0.27	2	79%	77%	200+

#### Resource and Operations

##### Headline Metrics

KPI 52	KPI 53	KPI 54	KPI 69	KPI 70
Trust avg variance to budget <3%	Total Trust Reserves (10-20%)	Total Revenue Reserves	Trust Health and Safety Compliance	Trust Overall RAMP index
2.61%	£3.455m (15%)	£2.942m	92%/100%	4.2

### Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the board of trustees has a reasonable expectation that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, the board of trustees continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the statement of accounting policies.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025***

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### **Promoting the success of the academy trust**

CAT promotes success by acting as One Trust, One Tribe—a single, values-led team that directs people, time and resources where they have the greatest impact, especially for disadvantaged and SEND pupils. We measure success through equity as well as excellence, using trust-wide standards that travel with the child and shared accountability for outcomes. This collective-efficacy approach underpins every decision and ensures no school or colleague is left behind.

Our workforce is the engine of improvement. In line with the Workforce Strategy, we build capacity through clear leadership expectations, talent and succession planning, targeted recruitment and retention, high-quality training, and a strong offer for engagement, wellbeing and benefits. Progress is monitored through our categorisation and maturity matrices with KPIs and verifiers giving the Board a transparent line of sight to impact.

Professional learning is intentional and system-wide. CLTA and the CAT SEND Hub provide blended CPD, networks and in-school residencies that strengthen classroom practice, subject leadership and inclusion. This deep investment in “what matters”—expert teaching and strong leadership—aligns with our Optimisation Plan and ensures consistent, high-ambition curricula across all schools.

We work collaboratively with governors, local authorities, parents, suppliers and local school networks to secure value, share expertise and widen opportunity. Growth is pursued responsibly through our hub model because scale—done well—improves financial resilience, unlocks specialist capacity (school improvement, business, SEND) and enables more equitable deployment of resources across the Trust.

Community and environmental responsibility are integral. Schools serve as civic anchors, expanding enrichment and outreach while improving estates sustainability and energy efficiency. High standards of governance and leadership provide fair, transparent decision-making and equitable allocation so every academy benefits. Together, these practices embed long-term stability and a culture where people thrive and pupils flourish—a coherent workforce strategy powering a One Trust culture, optimised for impact where need is greatest.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Financial review

Most of the Trust's income is obtained from the DfE in the form of grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. In the period 2024-2025, 9% (2023-2024: 12%) of the Trust's income was generated via trading activities, including nursery provision, catering, lettings, out of hours clubs, and services provided through Cheshire LTA.

GAG income predominantly funds staffing, premises costs, and educational activities across each academy. The income from other grants is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received from the DfE during the year ended 31 August 2025 and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities. The principal accounting policies adopted during the year are detailed in the notes to the financial statements

The Trust was again successful in securing Condition Improvement Funds (CIF) for our academies. In the 2025 round, 6 bids totaling £4.6m were successful with an additional £0.5m allocated via CIF loans. This provides significant capital investment into our estate to address key condition priorities. The majority of the CIF projects are expected to start and complete within the 2025-2026 financial year. Works funded in the 2024 round progressed towards completion during the year, including the roof replacements at Gayton Primary School and Woodfall Primary School, and the fire safety system upgrade at Woodchurch Road Academy.

In accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice, 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' (SORP 2019), devolved formula capital (DFC) grants are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities as restricted income in the fixed asset fund. The restricted fixed asset fund balance is reduced by annual depreciation charges over the expected useful life of assets.

The Trust also benefitted from additional grant funding awarded from a variety of bodies during the year. This included grants at Woodchurch Road Academy to introduce a nursery class (DfE) and open a wraparound provision (Wirral LA), grants to introduce a breakfast club at Woodchurch Road and Over Hall (DfE) and a grant to improve the outdoor area at Hebden Green (RHS).

A significant development during the period was the addition of Hebden Green School, a specialist SEND provision, which formally joined the Trust in April 2025. This has had a material impact on the Trust's financial profile, with increases in high-needs and top-up funding reflecting the specialist nature of provision. It has also brought additional staffing and estate-related costs. The Trust worked closely with Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority to ensure a smooth transfer, with appropriate due diligence and integration planning completed to safeguard the long-term sustainability of the school.

During the year the Trust also undertook a comprehensive review of its financial systems to ensure they remain fit for purpose in a growing and increasingly complex organisation. This review was framed against the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook, particularly the need for effective internal control and robust financial oversight. Opportunities were identified to adopt new financial technologies (fintech) to improve efficiency, strengthen compliance, enhance reporting capabilities, to reduce financial administration workloads and significantly reduce costs.

In early August 2025, the Trust has begun to implement new systems for accounting, procurement and budgeting, designed to provide leaders and Trustees with advanced financial analytics. These changes promote transparency, reduce administrative burden at academy level, and ensure the Trust maximises the advantages of current digital solutions to support effective resource management.

Importantly, the adoption of scalable systems strengthens the Trust's capacity to integrate new academies smoothly and underpins the financial resilience required as we work towards our growth strategy of expanding to 15 schools.

Revenue funds increased by £1,310,000 in the year to 31 August 2025 (2024: £475,000). The increase was largely driven by the transfer of funds on conversion from Hebden Green School and through continued robust financial management.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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The Trust is an employer within the Cheshire Pension Fund and the Merseyside Pension Fund, both of which are part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The LGPS schemes are funded, and assets are held separately from those of the Trust. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value, and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis. The most recent triennial valuation was completed in March 2023, with the next scheduled for March 2026.

Each academy in Cheshire Pension Fund continues to purchase ill health liability insurance for LGPS members through Legal and General, offsetting employer charges. A similar policy remains in place for Merseyside Pension Fund members, arranged directly by the fund. The employer contribution rates applied from April 2023 remained unchanged through this financial year.

The employer rate for each academy was amended on 1 April 2023, following an actuarial review of the scheme and this resulted in reductions in the employer contribution rates, the revised rates are set out below:

- 24.70% Bexton Primary School
- 23.80% Boughton Heath Academy
- 22.40% Cheshire Academies Trust
- 23.00% Cheshire LTA
- 21.70% Gayton Primary School
- 19.40% Kelsall Primary School
- 20.60% Manor Park School & Nursery
- 21.50% Mill View Primary School
- 20.50% Over Hall Community School
- 21.00% Rock Ferry Primary School
- 20.50% Woodchurch Road Academy
- 20.00% Woodfall Primary School

The Trust continued to meet its obligations under the Pensions Act 2008 for auto-enrolment of all eligible employees. Membership levels of the LGPS schemes remain stable with no material change at academy level.

At 31 August 2025 the net book value of fixed assets was £62,479,000 (2024: £47,110,000). Movement in tangible assets is shown in note 12 to the financial statements. The assets were used exclusively for providing education and the associated support services to the pupils in the Trust and the operation of CLTA.

During the year ended 31 August 2025, total revenue expenditure excluding depreciation of £20,577,000 (2024: £14,832,000) was met by recurrent grant funding from the ESFA/DfE together with other incoming resources.

#### Reserves policy

The Board of Trustees reviews the Trusts' Reserves Policy on a triennial basis and last did so in February 2024. The policy sets out a requirement for all academies to build a contingency reserve, equivalent to one month's net payroll cost, which is not available for the general purposes of the Academy Trust. The central Trust is required to hold a contingency reserve equivalent to 15% of annual income. The Trust aims to hold reserve balance of no less than 10% and no more than 20% of total income. The CFOO is required to report on an exceptional basis to Trustees if balances are expected to exceed these limits.

Contingency reserves are used to meet unplanned costs that cannot be funded elsewhere. They can only be accessed in line with policy requirements and the approval of the Trust. Academies that have not built to the required level of contingency reserve are required to include a plan to do so as part of the budget setting process. The timeframe over which an academy must build to the total fund is risk assessed on an annual basis in order to provide reassurance to the Board that the level of reserve held at any one time is sufficient to manage known and anticipated risk.

The Trust has overall reserves of £70,399,000 (2024: £51,715,000), included within is restricted general reserves (excluding pension & fixed asset reserves) of £254,000 (2024: £249,000) and unrestricted reserves of £3,272,000 (2024: £1,976,000). The total free reserves (excluding pension & fixed asset reserves) amounts to £3,526,000 (2024: £2,225,000).

The pension scheme liability as at 31st August 2025 was restricted to £nil (2024: £nil). The vast majority of the movement of the pension scheme liability is due to actuarial assumptions and does not have a direct cash impact.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Investment policy

The Trust aims to manage its cash balances to provide for the day-to-day working capital requirements of its operations, whilst protecting the real long-term value of any surplus cash balances against inflation.

Trustees updated the reserves policy in 2023-2024 to provide for the considered investment of contingency funds balances that are held across the Trust.

The Trust had no investments at 31 August 2025.

#### Principal risks and uncertainties

The Trust continued to implement its risk management policy during the year. The policy clearly outlines the responsibilities of the board, local governing bodies, academy principals and other staff in regards to managing risk and the appropriate steps to take in order to manage risk.

The Trust categorises risk into eight key strategic areas:

- Strategic
- Governance
- Compliance
- Financial
- Educational
- HR/Legal
- Estates
- Reputational

The Board has considered the major risks to which the Trust is exposed in each of these areas and applies the 'four T's' strategy to agree how the risks will be managed. These are to 'Tolerate', 'Treat', 'Transfer' or 'Terminate'. The process ensures that, on a termly basis, new risks are properly identified, reported and evaluated; that risks are considered as part of new project appraisals; and significant failures of control are properly reported and addressed; there is an adequate level of understanding of individual responsibility for implementing and monitoring control systems; further actions are identified; that the Board consider and review the annual process and that they are provided with relevant and timely interim reports.

To provide a systematic means of compliance, the Trust and its constituent academies hold an individual Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan (RAMP) that seeks to pull together the key aspects of the risk management process.

#### Financial and risk management objectives and policies

The financial risks of the Trust are shown in the Principal Risk statement above.

#### Fundraising

The Trust itself investigates non-governmental grant awarding bodies, which may be in a position to assist it in achieving its charitable aims, and submits formal applications for such grants. A number of grants were received by Trust academies in 2024-2025 including RHS grants to support the development of outdoor spaces, a grant to open a wraparound provision and grants from English and Maths Hubs. Total non-government grant funding in 2024-2025 was £32,500 (2024: £27,025).

Each Trust academy also has an appropriately constituted Parent Teacher Association (PTA). These solicit donations, primarily from parents, for specific projects, through organising Christmas and summer fairs, school discos, parents' social evenings etc. No professional fundraisers or commercial participators were used to assist any PTA during the year in its activities (2024: None) and no complaints were received by the Trust or any persons acting on its behalf about activities by the charity or any persons acting on its behalf in fundraising (2024: None).

The Trust monitors the activities of its PTAs to ensure that both vulnerable people and members of the public are protected against unreasonable intrusion or unreasonably persistent approaches for soliciting money or undue pressure to make donations.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Streamlined energy and carbon reporting

Cheshire Academies Trust is made up of ten primary schools and one special school. The boilers used to heat the buildings within the schools are a mixture of gas and gas oil fuelled. All schools purchase electricity.

One minibus is owned by Hebden Green Community School. There are approximately sixty members of staff across the whole trust who claim mileage reimbursement for their own personal vehicle. All of the mileage claims are for petrol cars.

#### UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period

	2025 kWh	2024 kWh
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh)	3,643,762	2,501,216
Emissions calculated (metric tonnes CO2e):	2025 tonnes CO2e	2024 tonnes CO2e
<i>Scope 1 emissions</i>		
- Gas combustion	293.00	262.00
- Fuel consumed for owned transport	0.51	-
<i>Total scope 1</i>	293.51	262.00
<i>Scope 2 emissions</i>		
- Electricity purchased	384.00	144.00
<i>Scope 3 emissions</i>		
- Fuel consumed for transport not owned by the academy trust	1.41	0.92
<i>Total gross emissions</i>	678.92	406.92
<i>Intensity ratio</i>		
Tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.24	0.18

#### Quantification and reporting methodology

We have followed the 2019 HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol – Corporate Standard and have used the 2025 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

#### Intensity measurement

The chosen intensity measurement ratio is total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2 equivalent per pupil, the recommended ratio for the sector.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Measures taken to improve energy efficiency

Three schools replaced all fluorescent lighting with LEDs during 2024-25; four had already completed this work in previous years.

Two schools upgraded some single-glazed windows to double glazing during 2024-25.

Two schools received new roofs constructed during 2024-25 through the CIF funding.

Remote working has been introduced for staff in the Central Trust team, and all school staff now use remote meetings to reduce unnecessary travel.

One academy has installed solar panels on its eco-classroom.

CIF funding was secured for an air source heat pump at Kelsall Primary, a new gas boiler and heating infra-structure at Woodchurch Road, and electrical re-wiring at Bexton, Woodfall and Woodchurch Road.

Note: The Trust operated ten academies during 2023-2024, which increased to eleven throughout 2024-2025. The comparison above reflects this expansion.

#### Plans for future periods

The Trust continues to progress its optimisation-led roadmap for sustainable growth and organisational development. At the core is a strengthened operating architecture that secures consistency in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment across all schools while enabling targeted support through our hub model. We are consolidating hubs in Cheshire and Wirral and extending specialist capacity through our Primary–Special approach, so that inclusive practice travels with the child. The addition of Hebden Green School (April 2025) has been pivotal—broadening expertise, accelerating the SEND Hub offer, and deepening our “preference and privilege disadvantage/SEND” lens across classrooms, leadership and central systems.

Looking ahead, we are considering a Liverpool hub where we can potentially make the greatest difference for vulnerable pupils and communities. Growth decisions are explicitly values-led and anchored to our Trust moral purpose so that expansion enhances quality, capacity and financial resilience without diluting standards. This is how we act as One Trust—deploying shared expertise and resources at need, and measuring success by how well the least advantaged do.

As we potentially enter a fourth local authority area, the Board has agreed to consult on a new Trust name reflecting our values, ethos and wider geography. Stakeholder engagement will run through the year so identity, narrative and purpose align with the expectations of our communities. The aim is coherence: local school individuality held within common values, aligned systems and shared accountability—creating the conditions for leaders to lead, staff to thrive and pupils to flourish.

We will continue to collaborate with strong MATs and local partners, building capacity through professional networks, peer review and shared services. This partnership stance is pragmatic and principled: it spreads what works, accelerates improvement at scale, and safeguards value for money so more resource reaches classrooms. Growth remains needs-led and carefully assessed—new schools must add expertise, capacity and alignment—while estates and digital infrastructure are developed to be safe, sustainable and scalable.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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Trust priorities for this year include:

- building a data intelligence dashboard which provides a single source to populate Trust KPIs and deliver intelligent insight to central team personnel.
- undertaking a rebranding initiative for the Trust, reflecting its growth, scale, and the diverse geographic locations of our schools.
- expanding the training offer from the SEND hub providing greater focus on assessment, curriculum and SENCo development.
- implementing a workforce strategy that nurtures talent, prioritises succession planning and builds culture and climate in schools to enable their success.
- building central capacity to deliver high-quality central services, effectively aligned to the evolving needs of our schools and growth of the Trust.
- reviewing the appraisal systems for teachers and support staff in order to enhance the consistency of experience, ensuring alignment and focussing on professional growth which is self directed.
- developing a full training programme on the use of current AI based software to support teachers and leaders.
- evaluating and refining our systems and structures to harness the potential of artificial intelligence effectively.
- converting up to 4 new schools in the academic year to consolidate both Cheshire and Wirral Hubs as well as opening a new hub in Liverpool.
- designing a communication strategy to provide clear and transparent information directly to parents at each individual school.

Through these priorities, we will continue to build capacity, grow responsibly and deliver excellence for pupils, staff and communities—placing vulnerability first and using our three strategies, with the Optimisation Plan as the spine, to ensure equity drives excellence across Cheshire, Wirral and Liverpool.

### Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others

To 31 August 2025, the Trust did not hold funds as custodian Trustee on behalf of others.

### Auditor

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Mitchell Charlesworth (Audit) Limited was appointed auditor to the charitable company. A resolution proposing re-appointment will be put to the members.

The trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 09/12/2025, and signed on its behalf by:



E Wright  
Chair



# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Scope of responsibility

As trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Cheshire Academies Trust has an effective and appropriate system of control, financial and otherwise. However, such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives, and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

As trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in the DfE's Governance Guide.

The board of trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer, as accounting officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Cheshire Academies Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. The accounting officer is also responsible for reporting to the board of trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

#### Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The board of trustees has formally met 8 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the board of trustees was as follows:

Trustees	Meetings attended	Out of possible
E Wright (Chair)	7	8
C Jeffs (Vice Chair/Vice Chair of Resources Committee)	6	8
A Brennan (Resigned 19 January 2025)	2	3
J Sandford (Chair of Resources Committee)	6	8
R Hughes	6	8
J Olanipekun	2	8
L Fletcher	4	8
J Myers	8	8
L Cowan (Chair of Standards and Curriculum Committee)	7	8

Emlyn Wright was appointed as Chair of the Trust Board for the 2024/25 academic year. Chris Jelfs was appointed Vice Chair of the Trust Board and, as part of succession planning has also been appointed Vice-Chair of the Resources Committee. Lindsay Cowan was appointed Chair of the Standards and Curriculum Committee.

The work of the trust board is set out in accordance with the annual planner of trust board business and covers the following areas:

- Vision and strategy
- Educational Performance
- Financial Performance
- Safeguarding
- Risk
- Policies
- Trust Board Business

The work of the committees (Resources and Standards Committee) are also set out in annual planners. Each of these planners are reviewed by the trust board at least annually.

All trustees receive the monthly management accounts and these are included as a standing item on both the trust board and resources committee agenda. The trustees receive copies of the minutes from the committees and the Chair of each committee will also provide a verbal update on the work that has taken place.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Conflicts of interest

All Trustees and Governors are required to state any pecuniary or conflicts of interest on induction which is then added to the academy or Trust's register of interests. The register is maintained throughout the year by the Governance Professional. All Trustees and Governors are required to formally update this on an annual basis in the autumn term. In addition, every board and Local Governing Body (LGB) meeting agenda begins with asking all attendees to declare any changes to their interests or any particular interest against the business of the meeting. This information informs the work of the Trust in ensuring it avoids conflicts in any matters pertaining to Trustee or Governor declarations.

All governors and trustees are provided with an internal Guide to Related-Party transactions which provides on what a related-party transaction is and what to do if a governor or trustee did want to enter into a related-party transaction. In addition, every board and local governing body meeting agenda asks governors or trustees to declare are related-party transactions or intention to enter into a related-party transaction. This information informs the work of the trust in ensuring that it complies with the rules around related-party transactions.

In order to maintain oversight of the LGBs, the Governance Director has reviewed and completed an analysis of skills audits and has spoken to a number of Chairs of LGBs to evaluate local governance. Governance hub meetings (Chairs, safeguarding and special educational needs) provide a forum to discuss trust developments, changes in legislation and the opportunity to share good practice or voice any concerns.

#### Governance reviews

In order to review the board's effectiveness, the Chair of the trust board meets annually and on an individual basis with each trustee. Findings are then fed back to the trust board. In conjunction with the National Governance Association, work has also taken place on developing a trustee development programme bespoke to the trust board based on an analysis of the skills audit.

#### Resources committee

The remit of the resources committee is to assist the Trust Board in ensuring that assets are dealt with in accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook and the Master Funding Agreement and are used to ensure the best outcomes of pupils.

The committee's remit extends to considering financial and staffing matters, audit and risk, and to approve policy relating to these matters.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustees	Meetings attended	Out of possible
C Jeffs (Vice Chair/Vice Chair of Resources Committee)	4	4
J Sandford (Chair of Resources Committee)	4	4
R Hughes	4	4
L Fletcher	1	4

#### Standards committee

The remit of the standards committee is to assist the Trust Board in holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils; ensuring that high educational performance standards across the Trust are maintained and ensuing appropriate compliance with statutory and contractual requirements.

The committee's remit extends to considering educational performance, safeguarding and risk and to approve policy relating to these matters.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustees	Meetings attended	Out of possible
E Wright (Chair)	3	3
A Brennan (Resigned 19 January 2025)	1	1
J Olanipekun	1	3
J Myers	3	3
L Cowan (Chair of Standards and Curriculum Committee)	2	3

#### Review of value for money

As accounting officer, the CEO has responsibility for ensuring that the academy trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. The accounting officer understands that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes, as well as estates safety and management, achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The accounting officer considers how the academy trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the board of trustees where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data or by using a framework where appropriate. The accounting officer for the academy trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- centralised provision of key management systems
- centralised provision of IT support and systems
- centralised provision of Health and Safety provision
- internal training offer
- effective contract negotiations
- school business support network to enable sharing of costs and products
- sharing of internal school improvement and resource management expertise

#### The purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of academy trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Cheshire Academies Trust for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

#### Capacity to handle risk

The board of trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the academy trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The board of trustees is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the board of trustees.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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### **The risk and control framework**

The academy trust's system of internal control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular, it includes:

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the board of trustees;
- regular reviews by the resource committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines;
- identification and management of risks.

The Board of Trustees decided to engage Elite Finance Ltd to perform testing of the application of specific HR policies across the Trust, as their internal scrutiny focus for 2024-2025. The assessment aimed to identify areas of inconsistency or weakness in the application of the Trusts absence, special leave and probationary policies to ensure compliance.

The identified inconsistency in application across the 77 test absences. Highlighted issues included inability on the part of schools to provide a complete evidence trail, inconsistencies in the use of the Trusts HR system for recording absence, lack of self-certification or return to work documentation and failure to refer to OHU at an appropriate time.

Whilst the findings were disappointing to the Trust it is accepted that this reflects the position following a period of rapid growth and change in key personnel, responsible for the processes at school level. The Trust intends to open discussions with its schools, early in the autumn term 2025 to fully establish the challenges in order to agree and share a plan to address the findings, no later than spring 2026.

### **Review of effectiveness**

As accounting officer, the Chief Executive Office has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. During the year in question the review has been informed by:

- the work of the internal reviewer;
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process or the school resource management self-assessment tool;
- the work of the executive managers within the academy trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework;
- the work of the external auditor; and
- correspondence from ESFA, eg financial notice to improve/notice to improve (FNTI/NtI) and 'minded to' letters.

The accounting officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the standards committee and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the advice of the resource committee and the accounting officer, the board of trustees is of the opinion that the academy trust has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 09/12/2025 and signed on its behalf by:



E Wright  
Chair

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025***

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As accounting officer of Cheshire Academies Trust, I confirm that I have had due regard to the framework of authorities governing regularity, propriety and compliance, including the trust's funding agreement with the Department for Education (DfE), and the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook, including responsibilities for estates safety and management. I have also considered my responsibility to notify the academy trust board of trustees and DfE of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding, including for estates safety and management.

I confirm that I and the board of trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of all funds by the academy trust, or material non-compliance with the framework of authorities.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or non-compliance have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to the board of trustees and DfE.



S Ellis

**Accounting Officer**

Date: 16/12/2025  
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# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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The trustees (who are also the directors of Cheshire Academies Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025 published by the Department for Education, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for ensuring that in its conduct and operation the charitable company applies financial and other controls, which conform with the requirements both of propriety and of good financial management. They are also responsible for ensuring that grants received from ESFA/DfE have been applied for the purposes intended.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on 09/12/2025 and signed on its behalf by:



E Wright  
Chair

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025***

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### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Cheshire Academies Trust for the year ended 31 August 2025 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025 issued by the Department for Education.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 August 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025.

### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the academy trust in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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### **Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report including the incorporated strategic report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the trustees' report including the incorporated strategic report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the academy trust and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' report, including the incorporated strategic report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

### **Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

### **Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**

We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and then design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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### Identifying and assessing potential risks related to irregularities

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we considered the following:

- the nature of the industry and sector, control environment and business performance;
- the school's own assessment of the risks that irregularities may occur either as a result of fraud or error;
- the results of our enquiries of management and members of the board of governors of their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities;
- any matters we identified having obtained and reviewed the school's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to:
- identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
- detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- the internal controls established to mitigate risks of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations; and
- the matters discussed among the audit engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, we considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas:

(i) The presentation of the Trust's Statement of Financial Activities, (ii) revenue recognition (iii) the overstatement of salary and other costs (iv) the assumptions used in the calculation of the valuation of the surplus or deficit on the defined benefit pension scheme and the movements for the year. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

We also obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the charity operates in, focusing on provisions of those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The key laws and regulations we considered in this context included the UK Companies Act, the Statement of Recommended Practice - 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued by the joint SORP making body, along with the Academies Financial Handbook and Accounts Direction 2024-25 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which may be fundamental to the academy's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. This includes regulations concerning Data Protection and Safeguarding.

### Audit response to risks identified

As a result of performing the above, we identified the presentation of the Trust's Statement of Financial Activities, revenue recognition and overstatement of wages and other costs as the key audit matters related to the potential risk of fraud. The key audit matters section of our report explains the matters in more detail and also describes the specific procedures we performed in response to those key audit matters.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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In addition to the above, our procedures to respond to risks identified included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations described above as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- enquiring of management and members of the board concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and reviewing correspondence with relevant authorities where matters identified were significant; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls we carried out testing of the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates were indicative of a potential bias; and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

We also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

#### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



#### Robert Hall (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of Mitchell Charlesworth (Audit) Limited, Statutory Auditor  
Accountants  
24 Nicholas Street  
Chester  
CH1 2AU

Date: 17/12/2025

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT ON REGULARITY TO CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025***

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In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 19 January 2024 and further to the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) as included in the extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Academy Trusts, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether anything has come to our attention that would suggest, in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received by Cheshire Academies Trust during the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 have not been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

This report is made solely to Cheshire Academies Trust and the Secretary of State for Education in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to Cheshire Academies Trust and the Secretary of State for Education those matters we are required to state in a report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than Cheshire Academies Trust and the Secretary of State for Education, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

### **Respective responsibilities of the accounting officer of Cheshire Academies Trust and the reporting accountant**

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of Cheshire Academies Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education and the Academy Trust Handbook, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance, and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Academy Trusts. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 have not been applied for the purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

### **Approach**

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountant of Academy Trusts issued by the DfE, which requires a limited assurance engagement as set out in our engagement letter.

The objective of a limited assurance engagement is to perform such procedures as to obtain information and explanations in order to provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express a negative conclusion on regularity.

A limited assurance engagement is more limited in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in a reasonable assurance engagement. Accordingly, we do not express a positive opinion.

Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity and propriety of the academy trust's income and expenditure.

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- An assessment of the risk of material irregularity and impropriety across the Academy Trust's activities;
- A review of the Academy Trust's accounting and internal procedures; and
- Consideration and review of the evidence supporting the Accounting Officer's statement on regularity, propriety and compliance.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT ON REGULARITY TO CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025***

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### **Conclusion**

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 has not been applied for the purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

### **Reporting Accountant**

Mitchell Charlesworth (Audit) Limited  
24 Nicholas Street  
Chester  
CH1 2AU

Date: .....

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £'000	General £'000	Restricted funds: Fixed asset £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>						
Donations and capital grants	3	209	1	4,744	4,954	3,210
Donations - transfer from local authority on conversion	25	357	(1,234)	13,939	13,062	22,783
Donations - transfer of existing academy into the trust	25	-	-	-	-	2,487
Charitable activities:						
- Funding for educational operations	4	266	19,923	-	20,189	13,811
- Teaching school	4	-	110	-	110	162
Other trading activities	5	1,252	-	-	1,252	961
<b>Total</b>		<u>2,084</u>	<u>18,800</u>	<u>18,683</u>	<u>39,567</u>	<u>43,414</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>						
Raising funds	6	-	1	-	1	1
Charitable activities:						
- Educational operations	8	780	19,589	1,539	21,908	15,506
- Teaching school	8	-	105	-	105	132
<b>Total</b>	6	<u>780</u>	<u>19,695</u>	<u>1,539</u>	<u>22,014</u>	<u>15,639</u>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		1,304	(895)	17,144	17,553	27,775
Transfers between funds	17	-	(232)	232	-	-
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses)</b>						
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension schemes	19	-	1,133	-	1,133	(760)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		1,304	6	17,376	18,686	27,015
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward		<u>1,976</u>	<u>249</u>	<u>49,490</u>	<u>51,715</u>	<u>24,700</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u>3,280</u>	<u>255</u>	<u>66,866</u>	<u>70,401</u>	<u>51,715</u>

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED) INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

Comparative year information		Unrestricted	Restricted funds:		Total
Year ended 31 August 2024		funds	General	Fixed asset	2024
	Notes	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
Donations and capital grants	3	348	-	2,862	3,210
Donations - transfer from local authority on conversion	25	216	691	21,876	22,783
Donations - transfer of existing academy into the trust	25	53	(39)	2,473	2,487
Charitable activities:					
- Funding for educational operations	4	216	13,595	-	13,811
- Teaching school	4	-	162	-	162
Other trading activities	5	961	-	-	961
<b>Total</b>		1,794	14,409	27,211	43,414
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds	6	-	1	-	1
Charitable activities:					
- Educational operations	8	1,349	13,350	807	15,506
- Teaching school	8	-	132	-	132
<b>Total</b>	6	1,349	13,483	807	15,639
<b>Net income</b>		445	926	26,404	27,775
Transfers between funds	17	-	(136)	136	-
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses)</b>					
Actuarial losses on defined benefit pension schemes	19	-	(760)	-	(760)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		445	30	26,540	27,015
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		1,531	219	22,950	24,700
Total funds carried forward		1,976	249	49,490	51,715

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## BALANCE SHEET

**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2025**

		2025	2024
	Notes	£'000	£'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	12	62,479	47,110
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	13	4,887	3,009
Cash at bank and in hand		6,387	3,193
		11,274	6,202
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(2,638)	(1,360)
<b>Net current assets</b>		8,636	4,842
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		71,115	51,952
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	15	(714)	(237)
<b>Net assets excluding pension asset</b>		70,401	51,715
Defined benefit pension scheme asset	19	-	-
<b>Total net assets</b>		70,401	51,715
<b>Funds of the academy trust:</b>			
<b>Restricted funds</b>	17		
- Fixed asset funds		66,866	49,490
- Restricted income funds		255	249
<b>Total restricted funds</b>		67,121	49,739
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>	17	3,280	1,976
<b>Total funds</b>		70,401	51,715

The financial statements on pages 37 to 64 were approved by the trustees and authorised for issue on ..... and are signed on their behalf by:

.....

E Wright

Chair

Company registration number 08108086 (England and Wales)

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

		2025		2024	
	Notes	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Cash funds transferred on conversion</b>	<b>25</b>		-		213
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Net cash provided by operating activities	20		2,694		526
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>					
Capital grants from DfE Group		2,951		481	
Capital funding received from sponsors and others		32		62	
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,970)		(747)	
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities</b>			13		(204)
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>					
New long term bank loan		485		246	
Repayment of long term bank loan		5		-	
Finance costs		(3)		-	
<b>Net cash provided by financing activities</b>			487		246
<b>Net increase in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period</b>			3,194		781
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year			3,193		2,412
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year</b>			6,387		3,193



# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### 1 Accounting policies

A summary of the principal accounting policies adopted (which have been applied consistently, except where noted), judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty, is set out below.

##### 1.1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the academy trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the trust. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £'000.

##### 1.2 Going concern

The trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate, ie whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charitable company to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of at least one year from the date of authorisation for issue of the financial statements and have concluded that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern. Thus they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

##### 1.3 Conversion to an academy trust

The conversion from a state maintained school to an academy trust involved the transfer of identifiable assets and liabilities and the operation of the school for £nil consideration. The substance of the transfer is that of a gift and it has been accounted for on that basis as set out below.

The assets and liabilities transferred on conversion from Hebden Green Community School to the academy trust have been valued at their fair value. The fair value has been derived based on that of equivalent items. The amounts have been recognised under the appropriate balance sheet categories, with a corresponding amount recognised in Donations – transfer from local authority on conversion in the Statement of Financial Activities and analysed under unrestricted funds, restricted general funds and restricted fixed asset funds. Further details of the transaction are set out in note 25.

##### 1.4 Income

All incoming resources are recognised when the academy trust has entitlement to the funds, the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably.

###### Grants

Grants are included in the statement of financial activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the balance sheet. Where income is received in advance of meeting any performance-related conditions there is not unconditional entitlement to the income and its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income until the performance-related conditions are met. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

General Annual Grant is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the period for which it is receivable, and any abatement in respect of the period is deducted from income and recognised as a liability.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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### **1 Accounting policies**

**(Continued)**

Capital grants are recognised in full when there is an unconditional entitlement to the grant. Unspent amounts of capital grants are reflected in the balance sheet in the restricted fixed asset fund. Capital grants are recognised when there is entitlement and are not deferred over the life of the asset on which they are expended.

#### Sponsorship income

Sponsorship income provided to the academy trust which amounts to a donation is recognised in the statement of financial activities in the period in which it is receivable (where there are no performance-related conditions), where the receipt is probable and it can be measured reliably.

#### Donations

Donations are recognised on a receivable basis (where there are no performance-related conditions) where the receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured.

#### Other income

Other income, including the hire of facilities, is recognised in the period it is receivable and to the extent the academy trust has provided the goods or services.

#### Donated goods, facilities and services

Goods donated for resale are included at fair value, being the expected proceeds from sale less the expected costs of sale. If it is practical to assess the fair value at receipt, it is recognised in stock and 'Income from other trading activities'. Upon sale, the value of the stock is charged against 'Income from other trading activities' and the proceeds are recognised as 'Income from other trading activities'. Where it is impractical to fair value the items due to the volume of low value items they are not recognised in the financial statements until they are sold. This income is recognised within 'Income from other trading activities'.

#### Donated fixed assets

Donated fixed assets are measured at fair value unless it is impractical to measure this reliably, in which case the cost of the item to the donor is used. The gain is recognised as income from donations and a corresponding amount is included in the appropriate fixed asset category and depreciated over the useful economic life in accordance with the academy trust's accounting policies.

### **1.5 Expenditure**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

#### Expenditure on raising funds

This includes all expenditure incurred by the academy trust to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities events and non-charitable trading.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

#### Charitable activities

These are costs incurred on the academy trust's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the academy trust apportioned to charitable activities.

#### 1.6 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Assets costing £500 or more (or £250 IT Equipment) are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with the aid of specific grants, either from the government or from the private sector, they are included in the balance sheet at cost and depreciated over their expected useful economic life. Where there are specific conditions attached to the funding that require the continued use of the asset, the related grants are credited to a restricted fixed asset fund in the statement of financial activities and carried forward in the balance sheet. Depreciation on the relevant assets is charged directly to the restricted fixed asset fund in the statement of financial activities. Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with unrestricted funds, depreciation on such assets is charged to the unrestricted fund.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset on a straight-line basis over its expected useful life, as follows:

Leasehold land and buildings	Land straight line over 125 years and Buildings straight line over 50 years
Assets under construction	Not depreciated
Computer equipment	25% on cost
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	20% on cost
Motor vehicles	20% on cost

The policy on depreciation of leasehold land has changed this year, following audit guidance. The historic difference caused by the change in policy has been adjusted within this year's figures.

The Trustees believe that this change in policy represents a true and fair presentation of the entity's financial position and performance.

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value of any fixed asset may not be recoverable. Shortfalls between the carrying value of fixed assets and their recoverable amounts are recognised as impairments. Impairment losses are recognised in the statement of financial activities.

#### 1.7 Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably. Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the academy trust anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

#### 1.8 Leased assets

Rentals under operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

#### 1.9 Financial instruments

The academy trust only holds basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102. The financial assets and financial liabilities of the academy trust and their measurement basis are as follows.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

##### Financial assets

Trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

Cash at bank is classified as a basic financial instrument and is measured at face value.

##### Financial liabilities

Trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition.

Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument.

#### 1.10 Taxation

The academy trust is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the academy trust is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by chapter 3 part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

#### 1.11 Pensions benefits

Retirement benefits to employees of the academy trust are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ('TPS') and the Local Government Pension Scheme ('LGPS'). These are defined benefit schemes and the assets are held separately from those of the academy trust.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the academy trust in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by the Government Actuary based on quadrennial valuations using a prospective unit credit method. The TPS is an unfunded multi-employer scheme with no underlying assets to assign between employers. Consequently, the TPS is treated as a defined contribution scheme for accounting purposes and the contributions are recognised in the period to which they relate.

The LGPS is a funded multi-employer scheme and the assets are held separately from those of the academy trust in separate trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The amounts charged to net income or expenditure are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred. Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the statement of financial activities and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in other recognised gains and losses. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in other recognised gains and losses.

#### 1.12 Fund accounting

Unrestricted income funds represent those resources which may be used towards meeting any of the charitable objects of the academy trust at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted fixed asset funds are resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by funders where the asset acquired or created is held for a specific purpose.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Restricted general funds comprise all other restricted funds received with restrictions imposed by the funder/donor and include grants from the Department for Education Group.

##### 1.13 Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the academy trust has an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event which it is probable will result in the transfer of economic benefits and the obligation can be estimated reliably.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar charges.

#### 2 Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Accounting estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

##### Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

The academy trust makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit asset/liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost or income for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 19, will impact on the carrying amount of the pension asset/liability. Furthermore, a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2025. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension asset/liability.

FRS 102 section 28.22 allows an entity to recognise a surplus within the Local Government Pension Scheme “only to the extent it is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan”. The actuarial report as at 31 August 2025 indicates a defined benefit asset position, which has been capped at nil value. This is on the basis that it is uncertain that a surplus following any triennial review would result in reduced contributions for the employer, and is unlikely to result in a repayment.

#### 3 Donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Donated fixed assets	-	-	-	7
Capital grants	-	4,712	4,712	2,855
Other donations	209	33	242	348
	<u>209</u>	<u>4,745</u>	<u>4,954</u>	<u>3,210</u>

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

### 4 Funding for the academy trust's charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
<b>Educational operations</b>				
<b>DfE/ESFA grants</b>				
General annual grant (GAG)	-	13,649	13,649	9,924
Other DfE/ESFA grants:				
- UIFSM	-	392	392	313
- Pupil premium	-	980	980	695
- Core schools budget grant	-	450	450	-
- Teachers' pay/pension grants	-	473	473	-
- DfE boarding grants	-	72	72	-
- Others	-	337	337	1,279
	-	16,353	16,353	12,211
<b>Other government grants</b>				
Local authority grants	-	3,569	3,569	1,359
Other government grants	-	1	1	25
	-	3,570	3,570	1,384
<b>Other incoming resources</b>	266	-	266	216
<b>Total funding for educational operations</b>	266	19,923	20,189	13,811
<b>Teaching school</b>	-	110	110	162
<b>Total funding</b>	266	20,033	20,299	13,973

### 5 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Hire of facilities	37	-	37	23
Catering income	312	-	312	237
Parental contributions	879	-	879	680
Other income	24	-	24	21
	1,252	-	1,252	961

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

### 6 Expenditure

	Staff costs	Non-pay expenditure		Total	Total
	£'000	Premises £'000	Other £'000	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Expenditure on raising funds					
- Direct costs	-	-	1	1	1
Academy's educational operations					
- Direct costs	14,020	1,155	974	16,149	11,296
- Allocated support costs	2,542	1,479	1,738	5,759	4,210
Teaching school					
- Direct costs	16	-	35	51	72
- Allocated support costs	44	3	7	54	60
	<u>16,622</u>	<u>2,637</u>	<u>2,755</u>	<u>22,014</u>	<u>15,639</u>

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Operating lease rentals	2	11
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	1,539	806
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	1
Fees payable to auditor for:		
- Audit	10	10
- Other services	10	9
Bank and loan interest	3	-
Net interest on defined benefit pension liability	(33)	(54)

### 7 Central services

The academy trust has provided the following central services to its academies during the year:

- School Improvement
- Continuous Professional Development
- Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Support
- Safeguarding Frameworks and Support
- Resource Management including Financial and Accounting Services, HR and Legal Support
- Health and Safety Support and Premises Development
- Governance Support
- Risk Management
- IT Infrastructure and Support
- Data Intelligence and Insights

The academy trust charges for these services on the following bases:

- amount per pupil £310;
- The Trust also levies 'rapid improvement charges' (RIC) against schools that are in need of support from the central team, over and above that provided within the core offer;
- academies are also recharged for their use of payroll software by total number of employees.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 7 Central services

(Continued)

The amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Bexton Primary School	135	139
Boughton Heath Primary School	71	68
Cheshire Leadership & Teaching Alliance	20	20
Gayton Primary School	70	67
Hebden Green Community School	29	-
Kelsall Primary School	66	64
Manor Park School & Nursery	80	70
Mill View Primary School	70	64
Over Hall Community School	76	19
Rock Ferry Primary School	89	57
Woodchurch Road Academy	121	79
Woodfall Primary School and Nursery	145	33
	<u>972</u>	<u>680</u>

#### 8 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
<b>Direct costs</b>				
Educational operations	780	15,369	16,149	11,296
Teaching school	-	51	51	72
<b>Support costs</b>				
Educational operations	-	5,759	5,759	4,210
Teaching school	-	54	54	60
	<u>780</u>	<u>21,233</u>	<u>22,013</u>	<u>15,638</u>



# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

### 8 Charitable activities (Continued)

Analysis of support costs	Teaching school £'000	Educational operations £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Support staff costs	49	2,807	2,856	2,127
Depreciation	-	384	384	202
Technology costs	-	346	346	210
Premises costs	3	1,095	1,098	940
Legal costs - conversion	-	49	49	49
Legal costs - other	-	7	7	27
Other support costs	2	1,035	1,037	674
Governance costs	-	36	36	41
	54	5,759	5,813	4,270

### 9 Staff

#### Staff costs and employee benefits

Staff costs during the year were:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Wages and salaries	12,002	8,798
Social security costs	1,289	790
Pension costs	2,871	1,977
Staff costs - employees	16,162	11,565
Agency staff costs	454	300
Staff restructuring costs	6	95
	16,622	11,960
Staff development and other staff costs	507	209
Total staff expenditure	17,129	12,169

Staff restructuring costs comprise:

Redundancy payments	6	16
Severance payments	-	79
	6	95

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 9 Staff (Continued)

##### Staff numbers

The average number of persons employed by the academy trust during the year was as follows:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Teachers	134	114
Administration and support	353	254
Management	33	25
	<u>520</u>	<u>393</u>

##### Higher paid staff

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs and employer national insurance contributions) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
£60,001 - £70,000	5	1
£70,001 - £80,000	2	3
£80,001 - £90,000	3	3
£90,001 - £100,000	4	-
£100,001 - £110,000	1	1
£110,001 - £120,000	1	-
	<u>16</u>	<u>8</u>

##### Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the academy trust comprise the trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of key management personnel benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the academy trust was £1,657,123 (2024: £1,257,601).

#### 10 Trustees' remuneration and expenses

The value of trustees' remuneration and other benefits was £nil (2024 - £nil).

Travel and subsistence payments were made to trustees during the year as follows:

E Wright                      -                      £106.80

Other related party transactions involving the trustees are set out within related parties note.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 11 Trustees' and officers' insurance

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the academy trust has purchased insurance to protect trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy trust business. The insurance provides cover up to £10,000,000 on any one claim. It is not possible to quantify the trustees and indemnity element from the overall cost of the RPA scheme.

#### 12 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold land and buildings	Assets under construction	Computer equipment	Fixtures, fittings & equipment	Motor vehicles	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 September 2024	48,360	421	617	589	1	49,988
Transfer on conversion	14,316	(421)	43	-	-	13,938
Additions	2,456	294	106	114	-	2,970
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
At 31 August 2025	65,132	294	766	703	1	66,896
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<b>Depreciation</b>						
At 1 September 2024	2,187	-	360	330	1	2,878
Charge for the year	1,304	-	130	105	-	1,539
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
At 31 August 2025	3,491	-	490	435	1	4,417
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<b>Net book value</b>						
At 31 August 2025	61,641	294	276	268	-	62,479
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
At 31 August 2024	46,173	421	257	259	-	47,110
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

#### 13 Debtors

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Trade debtors	48	65
VAT recoverable	249	180
Other debtors	-	4
Prepayments and accrued income	4,590	2,760
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	4,887	3,009
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

### 14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Government loans	22	9
Trade creditors	551	229
Other taxation and social security	352	231
Other creditors	935	295
Accruals and deferred income	778	596
	<u>2,638</u>	<u>1,360</u>

### 15 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Government loans	714	237
	<u>714</u>	<u>237</u>

Analysis of loans	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Wholly repayable within five years	736	246
Less: included in current liabilities	(22)	(9)
	<u>714</u>	<u>237</u>

Loan maturity		
Due in more than one year but not more than two years	57	20
Due in more than two years but not more than five years	213	67
Due in more than five years	444	150
	<u>714</u>	<u>237</u>

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 15 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

(Continued)

There are 11 loans from CIF, each are provided on the following terms:

- Loan of £60,400 with interest payable at 1.47%, repayable over 10 years from the date that it is advanced by 120 installments of £545.50.
- Loan of £46,694 with interest payable at 5.10%, repayable over 10 years from the date that it is advanced by 120 installments of £513.02.
- Loan of £30,745 with interest payable at 5.10%, repayable over 10 years from the date that it is advanced by 120 installments of £337.63.
- Loan of £104,696 with interest payable at 5.10%, repayable over 10 years from the date that it is advanced by 120 installments of £1,149.72.
- Loan of £9,964 with no interest payable, repayable over 8 years from the date that it is advanced by 16 installments of £622.75.
- Loan of £94,239, repayable over 10 years from the date that it is advanced by 120 installments. The interest and repayments have not yet been detailed but these will commence in the 2026/27 Academic year.
- Loan of £53,750, repayable over 10 years from the date that it is advanced by 120 installments. The interest and repayments have not yet been detailed but these will commence in the 2026/27 Academic year.
- Loan of £45,820, repayable over 10 years from the date that it is advanced by 120 installments. The interest and repayments have not yet been detailed but these will commence in the 2026/27 Academic year.
- Loan of £102,881, repayable over 10 years from the date that it is advanced by 120 installments. The interest and repayments have not yet been detailed but these will commence in the 2026/27 Academic year.
- Loan of £129,077, repayable over 10 years from the date that it is advanced by 120 installments. The interest and repayments have not yet been detailed but these will commence in the 2026/27 Academic year.
- Loan of £71,632, repayable over 10 years from the date that it is advanced by 120 installments. The interest and repayments have not yet been detailed but these will commence in the 2027/28 Academic year.

#### 16 Deferred income

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Deferred income is included within:		
Creditors due within one year	580	359
	=====	=====
Deferred income at 1 September 2024	359	344
Released from previous years	(359)	(344)
Resources deferred in the year	580	359
	=====	=====
Deferred income at 31 August 2025	580	359

The deferred income relates to Universal Infant Free School Meals, Local Authority grants, conversion grants, parental contributions received in advance and school trip income received in advance.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 17 Funds

	Balance at 1 September 2024 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2025 £'000
<b>Restricted general funds</b>					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	13,649	(13,417)	(232)	-
UIFSM	-	392	(392)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	980	(980)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	1,332	(1,332)	-	-
Other government grants	-	3,570	(3,570)	-	-
Teaching school	117	110	(105)	-	122
Other restricted funds	132	1	-	-	133
Pension reserve	-	(1,234)	101	1,133	-
	<u>249</u>	<u>18,800</u>	<u>(19,695)</u>	<u>901</u>	<u>255</u>
<b>Restricted fixed asset funds</b>					
Inherited on conversion	31,361	13,939	(761)	-	44,539
DfE group capital grants	17,995	4,712	(739)	-	21,968
Capital expenditure from GAG	123	-	(32)	232	323
Donated assets	11	32	(7)	-	36
	<u>49,490</u>	<u>18,683</u>	<u>(1,539)</u>	<u>232</u>	<u>66,866</u>
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>49,739</u>	<u>37,483</u>	<u>(21,234)</u>	<u>1,133</u>	<u>67,121</u>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General funds	<u>1,976</u>	<u>2,084</u>	<u>(780)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,280</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>51,715</u>	<u>39,567</u>	<u>(22,014)</u>	<u>1,133</u>	<u>70,401</u>

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

#### Restricted General Funds

These comprise of all restricted funds other than restricted fixed asset fund and include grants from the Education and Skills Fund Agency and local authorities.

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the academy trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG that it could carry forward.

#### Unrestricted Funds

These comprise of resources that may be used towards meeting any of the charitable objects of the academy trust at the discretion of the trustees.

#### Restricted Fixed Asset Funds

These comprise of resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and local authorities where the asset acquired or created is held for a specific purpose

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 17 Funds

(Continued)

Comparative information in respect of the preceding period is as follows:

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2024 £'000
<b>Restricted general funds</b>					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	9,924	(9,788)	(136)	-
UIFSM	-	313	(313)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	695	(695)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	1,279	(1,279)	-	-
Other government grants	-	1,384	(1,384)	-	-
Teaching school	87	162	(132)	-	117
Other restricted funds	132	-	-	-	132
Pension reserve	-	652	108	(760)	-
	<u>219</u>	<u>14,409</u>	<u>(13,483)</u>	<u>(896)</u>	<u>249</u>
<b>Restricted fixed asset funds</b>					
Inherited on conversion	9,902	21,876	(417)	-	31,361
DfE group capital grants	13,039	5,328	(375)	3	17,995
Capital expenditure from GAG	-	-	(13)	136	123
Donated assets	9	7	(2)	(3)	11
	<u>22,950</u>	<u>27,211</u>	<u>(807)</u>	<u>136</u>	<u>49,490</u>
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>23,169</u>	<u>41,620</u>	<u>(14,290)</u>	<u>(760)</u>	<u>49,739</u>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General funds	<u>1,531</u>	<u>1,794</u>	<u>(1,349)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,976</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>24,700</u>	<u>43,414</u>	<u>(15,639)</u>	<u>(760)</u>	<u>51,715</u>

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 17 Funds (Continued)

##### Total funds analysis by academy

	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
Fund balances at 31 August 2025 were allocated as follows:		
Bexton Primary School	698	529
Boughton Heath Primary School	184	152
Cheshire Leadership & Teaching Alliance	69	116
Gayton Primary School	154	157
Hebden Green Community School	504	-
Kelsall Primary School	215	236
Manor Park School & Nursery	420	329
Mill View Primary School	182	151
Over Hall Community School	149	32
Rock Ferry Primary School	172	173
Woodchurch Road Academy	209	54
Woodfall Primary School and Nursery	310	143
Central services	269	153
Total before fixed assets fund and pension reserve	3,535	2,225
Restricted fixed asset fund	66,866	49,490
Pension reserve	-	-
Total funds	70,401	51,715



# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 17 Funds

(Continued)

##### Total cost analysis by academy

Expenditure incurred by each academy during the year was as follows:

	Teaching and educational support staff £'000	Other support staff costs £'000	Educational supplies £'000	Other costs excluding depreciation £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Bexton Primary School	2,051	333	87	355	2,826	2,787
Boughton Heath Primary School	770	173	95	202	1,240	1,186
Cheshire Leadership & Teaching Alliance	16	44	35	11	106	111
Gayton Primary School	813	147	67	199	1,226	1,185
Hebden Green Community School	1,258	183	169	153	1,763	-
Kelsall Primary School	923	196	85	166	1,370	1,307
Manor Park School & Nursery	1,075	190	58	243	1,566	1,667
Mill View Primary School	942	232	67	148	1,389	1,347
Over Hall Community School	950	177	60	156	1,343	483
Rock Ferry Primary School	1,741	257	96	438	2,532	1,590
Woodchurch Road Academy	1,103	236	60	207	1,606	1,689
Woodfall Primary School and Nursery	1,998	228	99	382	2,707	646
Central services	396	258	36	216	906	942
	14,036	2,654	1,014	2,876	20,580	14,940

#### 18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	General £'000	Restricted funds: Fixed asset £'000	Total Funds £'000
<b>Fund balances at 31 August 2025 are represented by:</b>				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	62,479	62,479
Current assets	3,280	2,659	5,335	11,274
Current liabilities	-	(2,404)	(234)	(2,638)
Non-current liabilities	-	-	(714)	(714)
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>3,280</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>66,866</b>	<b>70,401</b>

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

### 18 Analysis of net assets between funds

(Continued)

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	General £'000	Restricted funds: Fixed asset £'000	Total Funds £'000
<b>Fund balances at 31 August 2024 are represented by:</b>				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	47,110	47,110
Current assets	1,976	1,600	2,626	6,202
Current liabilities	-	(1,351)	(9)	(1,360)
Non-current liabilities	-	-	(237)	(237)
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>1,976</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>49,490</b>	<b>51,715</b>

### 19 Pension and similar obligations

The academy trust's employees belong to two principal pension schemes: the Teachers' Pension Scheme England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff; and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff, which is managed by Cheshire Pension Fund and Merseyside Pension Fund. Both are multi-employer defined benefit schemes.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2020, and that of the LGPS related to the period ended 31 March 2022.

Contributions amounting to £390,532 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2025 (2024: £298,237) and are included within creditors.

#### Teachers' Pension Scheme

##### Introduction

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. Membership is automatic for teachers in academy trusts. All teachers have the option to opt out of the TPS following enrolment.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme to which both the member and employer makes contributions, as a percentage of salary. These contributions are credited to the Exchequer. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

##### Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to ensure scheme costs are recognised and managed appropriately and the review specifies the level of future contributions.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

### 19 Pension and similar obligations

**(Continued)**

Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 22 April 2024, with the SCAPE rate, set by HMT, applying a notional investment return based on 1.7% above the rate of CPI. The key elements of the valuation outcome are:

- Employer contribution rates set at 28.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administration levy). This is an increase of 5% in employer contributions and the cost control result is such that no change in member benefits is needed.
- Total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service to the effective date of £262,000 million and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222,200 million, giving a notional past service deficit of £39,800 million.

The result of this valuation has been implemented from 1 April 2024. The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2027.

The employer's pension costs paid to the TPS in the period amounted to £1,377,445 (2024: £994,540).

A copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation is on the Teachers' Pensions website.

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The academy trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan. Accordingly, the academy trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The academy trust has set out above the information available on the scheme.

#### Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contributions are as noted below. The agreed contribution rates for future years are % for employers and % for employees.

As described in note 25 the LGPS obligation relates to the employees of the academy trust, being the employees transferred as part of the conversion from the maintained school and new employees who joined the scheme in the period. The obligation in respect of employees who transferred on conversion represents their cumulative service at both the predecessor school and the academy trust at the balance sheet date.

Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, to a guarantee that, in the event of academy closure, outstanding Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013 and on 21 July 2022, the Department for Education reaffirmed its commitment to the guarantee, with a parliamentary minute published on GOV.UK.

<b>Total contributions made</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Employer's contributions	893	690
Employees' contributions	270	205
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total contributions	1,163	895
	<hr/>	<hr/>

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 19 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

Principal actuarial assumptions	2025 %	2024 %
Rate of increase in salaries	3.70	3.54
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.65	2.66
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	6.13	5.00
	=====	=====

The current mortality assumptions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on retirement age 65 are:

	2025 Years	2024 Years
Retiring today		
- Males	20.9	20.9
- Females	23.6	24.4
Retiring in 20 years		
- Males	21.8	21.1
- Females	25	24.9
	=====	=====

#### Sensitivity analysis

Scheme liabilities would have been affected by changes in assumptions as follows:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Discount rate + 0.1%	-324	-292
Discount rate - 0.1%	324	292
Mortality assumption + 1 year	499	460
Mortality assumption - 1 year	-499	-460
CPI rate + 0.1%	320	289
CPI rate - 0.1%	-320	-289
	=====	=====

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 19 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

##### The academy trust's share of the assets in the scheme

	2025 Fair value £'000	2024 Fair value £'000
Equities	10,364	7,706
Bonds	4,543	3,447
Cash and other liquid assets	237	76
Property	2,364	1,802
Other assets	1,524	1,491
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total market value of assets	19,032	14,522
Restriction on scheme assets	(4,366)	(1,166)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net assets recognised	14,666	13,356
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The actual return on scheme assets was £1,209,000 (2024: £963,000).

##### Amount recognised in the statement of financial activities

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Current service cost	825	636
Interest income	(798)	(551)
Interest cost	765	497
Benefit changes, curtailments and settlements gains or losses	(6)	(5)
Administration expenses	6	5
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total amount recognised	792	582
	<hr/>	<hr/>

##### Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
At 1 September 2024	13,356	6,249
Transferred in on existing academies joining the academy trust	3,503	5,726
Current service cost	825	636
Interest cost	759	492
Employee contributions	270	205
Actuarial (gain)/loss	(3,922)	127
Benefits paid	(125)	(79)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 August 2025	14,666	13,356
	<hr/>	<hr/>

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

### 19 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

#### Changes in the fair value of the academy trust's share of scheme assets

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
At 1 September 2024	14,522	6,370
Transferred in on existing academies joining the academy trust	2,269	6,378
Interest income	798	551
Actuarial gain	411	412
Employer contributions	893	690
Employee contributions	270	205
Benefits paid	(125)	(79)
Effect of non-routine settlements and administration expenses	(6)	(5)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 August 2025	19,032	14,522
Restriction on scheme assets	(4,366)	(1,166)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net assets recognised	14,666	13,356
	<hr/>	<hr/>

#### Restriction of pension scheme assets

The net gain recognised on scheme assets has been restricted because the full pension surplus is not expected to be recovered through refunds or reduced contributions in the future.

### 20 Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	Notes	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Net income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)		17,553	27,775
Adjusted for:			
Net surplus on conversion to academy	25	(13,062)	(22,783)
Net surplus on transfer of academy in the trust		-	(2,487)
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income		(4,744)	(2,862)
Finance costs payable		3	-
Defined benefit pension costs less contributions payable	19	(68)	(54)
Defined benefit pension scheme finance income	19	(33)	(54)
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets		1,540	806
Loss on disposal of fixed assets		-	1
(Increase) in debtors		(117)	(247)
Increase in creditors		1,265	375
Stocks, debtors and creditors transferred on conversion	25	357	56
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash provided by operating activities		2,694	526
		<hr/>	<hr/>

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 21 Analysis of changes in net funds

	1 September 2024 £'000	Cash flows £'000	31 August 2025 £'000
Cash	3,193	3,194	6,387
Loans falling due within one year	(9)	(13)	(22)
Loans falling due after more than one year	(237)	(477)	(714)
	<u>2,947</u>	<u>2,704</u>	<u>5,651</u>

#### 22 Long-term commitments

##### Operating leases

At 31 August 2025 the total of the academy trust's future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases was:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Amounts due within one year	14	20
Amounts due in two and five years	16	28
	<u>30</u>	<u>48</u>

#### 23 Related party transactions

There were related party transactions in the year to Tarporley Talk for advertising for £275 (2024: £550). Tarporley Talk is owned by the husband of the principal of Kelsall Primary School. There were no balances outstanding at the year end.

Other than this there were no other related party transactions.

#### 24 Members' liability

Each member of the charitable company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of it being wound up while he or she is a member, or within one year after he or she ceases to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £nil for the debts and liabilities contracted before he or she ceases to be a member.

# CHESHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 25 Conversion to an academy

On 1 April 2025 Hebden Green Community School converted to academy trust status under the Academies Act 2010 and all the operations and assets and liabilities were transferred to Cheshire Academies Trust from the Chester and Cheshire West Local Authority for £nil consideration.

The transfer has been accounted for as a combination that is in substance a gift. The assets and liabilities transferred were valued at their fair values and recognised in the balance sheet under the appropriate headings with a corresponding net amount recognised as a net gain in the statement of financial activities as charitable activities – transfer from local authority on conversion.

The following table sets out the fair values of the identifiable assets and liabilities transferred and an analysis of their recognition in the statement of financial activities.

Academy	Location	Date of conversion		
Hebden Green Community School	Winsford	1 April 2025		

  

	Unrestricted funds £'000	General £'000	Restricted funds: Fixed asset £'000	Total 2025 £'000
<b>Net assets transferred:</b>				
Leasehold land and buildings	-	-	13,895	13,895
Other tangible fixed assets	-	-	44	44
Pension scheme deficit	-	(1,234)	-	(1,234)
Debtor - surplus balance	357	-	-	357
	<u>357</u>	<u>(1,234)</u>	<u>13,939</u>	<u>13,062</u>
	<u><u>357</u></u>	<u><u>(1,234)</u></u>	<u><u>13,939</u></u>	<u><u>13,062</u></u>

  

	Unrestricted funds £'000	General £'000	Restricted funds: Fixed asset £'000	Total 2025 £'000
<b>Funds surplus/(deficit) transferred:</b>				
Fixed assets funds	-	-	13,939	13,939
LA budget funds	357	-	-	357
LGPS pension funds	-	(1,234)	-	(1,234)
	<u>357</u>	<u>(1,234)</u>	<u>13,939</u>	<u>13,062</u>
	<u><u>357</u></u>	<u><u>(1,234)</u></u>	<u><u>13,939</u></u>	<u><u>13,062</u></u>