

Company Registration Number: 07926573 (England & Wales)

THE SIGMA TRUST

(A company limited by guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023



SIGMA TRUST

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	Richard Moodey Nick Pavitt Bharat Parmar Stephen Ling (resigned 20 October 2022) Joanna Hazlewood (appointed 10 October 2023)
Trustees	Nick Pavitt, Chair of Trustees (resigned 31 August 2023) ^{3,5} Sue Hammond, Chair of Trustees (from 1 September 2023) ^{2,3,4} Clive Bull (resigned 25 September 2023) ^{1,2} Steve McGrath, Vice Chair, Chair of Audit & Risk Committee ^{1,2} Adrian Leggett, Chair of Finance Committee ^{1,3} Stephen Wyatt, Chair of Standards Committee ³ Carol Carlsson Browne, Chair of ITT Strategic Committee ^{1,3,4} Bradley Powell ^{1,2,5} Lyn Wright, Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer ^{1,3,4} Jan Atkinson, Chair of People and Culture Committee ^{3,5} Peter Standing ^{1,2,5} ¹ Finance Committee ² Audit and Risk Committee ³ Standards Committee ⁴ ITT Strategic Committee ⁵ People & Culture Committee
Company registered number	07926573
Company name	The Sigma Trust
Registered office	Clacton County High School 51 Walton Road Clacton On Sea Essex CO15 6DZ
Principal operating office	Tendring Education Centre Jaywick Lane Clacton On Sea Essex CO16 8BE
Company secretary	Krista Hook
Chief Executive Officer	Lyn Wright

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Senior management team

(Executive Committee) Lyn Wright, CEO, Accounting Officer
Brian Markham, Chief Operations & Finance Officer
Krista Hook, Chief Administrative Officer
Scott Holder, Director of Education
Alison Pierson, Director of Safeguarding & Pastoral Care
Gavin Bradley, Director of Primary Education (from 1 September 2023)

Independent auditors Griffin Chapman
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditors
4 & 5 The Cedars
Apex 12
Old Ipswich Road
Colchester
Essex
CO7 7QR

Bankers Lloyds Bank
27 High Street
Colchester
Essex
CO1 1DU

Solicitors Eversheds Sutherland
Bridgewater Place
Water Lane
Leeds
LS11 5DR

Michelmores LLP
Woodwater House
Pynes Hill
Exeter
EX2 5WR

Browne Jacobson LLP
15th Floor
6 Bevis Marks
London
EC3 7BA

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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the Charitable Company for the period 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023. The Annual Report serves the purpose of both a Trustees' report, and a directors' report under company law.

As at 31st August 2023, the Trust operated four primary academies, of which one includes a nursery provision, eight secondary academies, three of which offer post-16 provision. All our academies serve a catchment area in the Colchester and Tendring locality within North East Essex. The Trust has a combined net Pupil Capacity of 12,920 and had a number on roll of 11,424 in the Autumn 2023 census an increase of 303 from the 2022 Autumn Census.

The Sigma Trust academies are:

- Alton Park Junior School~ 7-11 provision~ Rebrokered in October 2019
- Clacton County High School~ 11-19 provision (16-19 provision, known locally as Sigma Sixth, is delivered at the Tendring Education Centre campus)
- The Colne Community School and College ~ 11-18 provision Rebrokered in January 2019
- Harwich and Dovercourt High School ~ 11-18 provision ~ Rebrokered in June 2017
- Holland Park Primary School ~ 4-11 provision ~ Rebrokered in October 2019
- Monkwick Infant & Nursery School~ 2-7 provision (Including Nursery)
- Monkwick Junior School~ 7-11 provision
- Paxman Academy, Free School ~ 11-16 Provision ~ Free School opened September 2019
- Philip Morant School and College ~ 11-18 provision ~ rebrokered in January 2019
- St Helena School~ 11-16 provision
- The Stanway School ~ 11-16 provision
- The Thomas Lord Audley School ~ 11-16 provision

The Sigma Trust is also the legal entity for the North Essex Teacher Training, an initial teacher training scheme.

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 The Sigma Trust are also the Directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law.

The Charitable Company operates as The Sigma Trust.

The Sigma Trust trading institutions are:

- Alton Park Junior School
- Clacton County High School
- Colne Community School and College
- Harwich and Dovercourt High School
- Holland Park Primary School
- Monkwick Infant School & Nursery
- Monkwick Junior School
- Paxman Academy
- Philip Morant School and College
- St Helena School
- The Stanway School
- The Thomas Lord Audley School
- North Essex Teacher Training (NETT) (ceased operating on 31st August 2023)

Details of the Trustees who served throughout the year, and to the date these accounts 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.

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Trustees' Indemnities

In accordance with the Companies Act 2006 s236, the Trust has purchased Trustees' Liability Insurance to protect the Trustees and Officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions whilst on Trust business. The cover under the policy is £10 million; this is held with the Education Skills Funding Agency's Risk Protection Arrangement. In the period under review there have been no claims made against this policy.

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

The Academy Board of Trustees shall comprise of no less than three Trustees and not be subjected to any maximum. As per the Articles of Association, the Academy Trust will endeavour to set the following structure,

- Up to eight Trustees (to be elected and confirmed by the Members)
- The Chief Executive Officer (providing that the CEO agrees to act, appointed by the Members)
- The Academy Trust may appoint up to three co-opted Trustees under Article 58.
- A minimum of two Parent Trustees if no Local Governing Boards are established.
- Up to a maximum of one third of Trustees to be employees, including the CEO if they choose to act.

The Sigma Trust has established Local Governance Committees (LGCs) and each LGC has a constitution to include a minimum of two parent Governors.

All Trustees are appointed for a four-year period and are able to be re-elected continually every four years subject to remaining eligible to be a particular type of Trustee; any Trustee may be reappointed or re-elected at a general meeting.

The Trust is required to have a minimum of three Members, as at 31st August 2023 the Trust had three active Members. An employee of the Trust is not eligible to hold the post of a Member. Appointment to the position of Member must be made by the majority of remaining Members and subject to the signing of written consent to become a Member and entered into the Register of Members.

The Members meet at least twice per year to receive Trust updates from the Chair of Trustees and the CEO. The Members hold and attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in December to receive the Financial Statements and Trustees Report.

When the need arises to fill a vacant Trustee position on the Board, the Members take this opportunity to review the skills within the remaining body and look to complement any perceived skills shortage with new Trustees pertaining those attributes, this may be through targeted approaches to known individuals, canvassing letters to relevant industry fields, recruitment via approved charity Trustee recruitment programmes or direct recruitment events advertised in local media. Any potential Trustees are then 'interviewed' by a Member and Trustee to ensure the appropriate skills required are evident during this process.

The Trustees have established Local Governance Committees (LGCs) for its academies which will be directly accountable to the Trustees. Article 100 of the Articles of Association provides for the appointment by the Trustees of committees (including LGCs) to whom the Trustees may delegate certain functions of the Trustees.

The composition of an Academy LGC shall be agreed between the Trust and the Local Governance Committee but shall include:

- No less than nine and no more than fifteen members
- At least two parent members
- The Headteacher of the relevant academy or academies
- A maximum of a third of its members to be employees of the LGC academy including the headteacher(s)

The first LGC will be established by the Board of Trustees. Thereafter, each LGC will propose future members, subject to formal appointment by the Trustees, delegated to the CEO. Whilst each LGC will look to recruit its own members, it is the responsibility of the Trust Board both to appoint and, should it ever be required, to dismiss individual LGC members.

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Trustees maintain the right to dissolve any LGC and form an Interim Executive LGC with the intention of providing interim expertise, high quality governance oversight and support rapid school improvement. Any Interim Executive LGC membership will be determined by the Trustees and will be exempt from the minimum and maximum membership quota.

The Trustees shall have the right (but shall not be required) to direct that any one member or all members of the LGC resign their post(s). Every individual LGC member will be required to make an application and self-evaluation of skills and experience as part of the application process.

The Trustees will appoint the Chair of each LGC for an initial period of three years. Members of LGCs are appointed for a three-year term in the first instance. Thereafter, a member may put themselves forward for reappointment. This will be subject to the agreement of the Trustees.

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees and LGC members

New Trustees attend an induction meeting with the CEO and Chair of the Trustees to understand the role and expectations to support and challenge the Trust. All Trustees undertake training as appropriate to their work at the Trust and the relevant responsibility of which they may undertake. For the academic year 2022-23, a full schedule of training and development sessions were arranged and delivered.

The Chair of the Trustees and CEO meet at least twice per year with LGC Chairs to share best practice, arrange relevant collaborative Trust training sessions and share information and views for both LGCs and Trustees.

Organisational Structure

The Trustees are responsible for the overall management and control of the Trust, its academies and, up to 31st August 2023, the North Essex Teacher Training scheme (NETT).

The Trustees have established a clear structure to delegate strategic and operational management to the Trust's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is supported directly by a senior management team of five, a Chief Operations & Finance Officer (COFO), a Director of Education, a Director of Primary Education, a Director of Safeguarding & Pastoral Care and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

During the summer term of this academic year, the CEO established a new Education Leadership Team (ELT), with the purpose of developing and embedding a collaborative layer of strategic School Leadership. The membership of the ELT consists of the CEO, Director of Education, Director of Primary Education and three Executive Headteachers. Day to day management of the academies is delegated to the Headteachers, and the management of the NETT Scheme is delegated to the Programme Director.

The CEO is the Trust Accounting Officer and has overall responsibility for the appropriate use of the Trust's funds.

The newly formed Education Leadership Team meets twice per term and is predominantly responsible for the medium and long-term strategic School Improvement cycle. The Executive Committee, which consists of the Executive Headteachers, Heads of Schools for each Trust academy, the Director of Education, Director of Primary Education, COFO and CAO meets at least once per term with the CEO and addresses day to day operations and planning. The CEO has responsibility for ensuring that the Trust's Strategic Improvement Plan is delivered and the Trust's Plan is embedded within each individual academy's Improvement Plans.

The day-to-day procedures of the Trust and its academies are managed in line with the relevant policies approved by the Board of Trustees or associated committees. Academy expenditure is managed in line with the Finance Regulations and the approved budget.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The setting of remuneration for all Trust employees, including the Chief Executive Officer, is based on nationally agreed pay and conditions. The Trust has established employment policies including a Pay Policy and Performance Management Policy, these policies are in place for all Trust employees.

As identified in the Trust's Pay Policy, the leadership and management team's remuneration is based on

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the criteria set out in the nationally agreed Pay and Conditions documents and is benchmarked against the nationally agreed leadership pay ranges. The Headteachers' pay ranges are based on the established group size for an academy, these are then reviewed in light of any additional responsibilities undertaken by the Headteachers such as providing support and/or leadership for other schools. Other leadership salaries are determined by the LGCs in collaboration with the Trust's CEO ensuring that responsibilities are remunerated in a fair and transparent manner and that there are sufficient differentials between each tier of management.

The centrally employed team's remuneration is also based on the criteria set out in nationally agreed Pay and Conditions documents and is benchmarked against both the nationally agreed Teachers or LGPS pay ranges. This is also being supported, where required, by external benchmarking data provided from both market factors and the Confederation of School Trusts' sector specific executive pay salary benchmarking analytics.

All staffing, including key management personnel, are subject to robust, evidence-based performance management processes and these are monitored by the relevant LGCs' representative and the CEO. When reviewing staffing structures, reviews of the successes and challenges of the academies, as well as value for money are considered against expended funds on leadership staffing costs.

An external professional advisor is used within the performance management process for all academy Headteachers and the CEO. A full report is provided to the Board of Trustees for the approval of the remuneration for the Trust's CEO, Headteachers and other key management personnel.

The Trustees do not offer 'bonus' or 'gratuity' payments to any staff, including key management.

Trade Union Facility Time

Relevant Union Officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period - 23

Full-time equivalent employee number – 18.32

Percentage of time spent on facility time

0% - 17

1-50% - 6

51-99% - 0

100% - 0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Total cost of facility time - £19,794

Total pay bill - £60,973,000

Percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time - 0.032%

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours – 14.010%

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

To support the Trust to achieve agreed objectives, the Trust and its academies liaise with like-minded organisations such as the Local Authority, other government affiliated partners and Department for Education associated bodies as well as many other local educational providers, local schools and higher educational providers.

The Sigma Trust is also the recognised legal entity by the Department for Education for the North Essex Teacher Training (NETT) scheme. The Trustees have established an ITT Strategic Committee to have oversight of the scheme. With the Initial Teacher Training Market Review and compounding Ofsted inspection, the North Essex Teacher Training Scheme ceased operating on 31st August 2023.

The CEO led the NETT Director to operate the scheme in line with the guidance and expectations set out by the DfE and ESFA. The financial and governance policies for the NETT scheme are embedded within the Trust's policies and procedures.

Two of our Trust 16-18 academies also work in partnership with other local 16-18 secondary schools in the locality and Essex University to form the VI6 initiative. This collaboration enables the sharing of best

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teaching and the provision of the broadest curriculum offer of minority subjects which could not be offered viably in a single institution.

All academies within the Trust are members of either ASHE (Association of Secondary Headteachers in Essex) or EPHA (Essex Primary Headteachers' Association). These two groups allow the sharing of best practice, educational policy changes and a route for information and guidance to be shared directly from Essex County Council to Headteachers.

The Trust subscribes to The Confederation of School Trusts (CST) and the National Governance Association (NGA).

The Academies have operational connections with Colchester's ITT provision, CTTC, a national teacher recruitment and training scheme 'Teach First' and our secondary schools predominantly access core alternative education from the local provider; NEECA.

The Trust partners with the Ambition Institute for the delivery and sign off for the Early Career Framework (ECF), the staff development NPQ framework and, in July 2023, agreed a partnership with Ambition Institute for the delivery of ITT from September 2024.

The Trust works in collaboration with the Learning Pathways Academy Trust and The Tapscott Trust for the provision of primary school improvement and executive leadership support at the Trust's primary schools.

Engagement with employees, Equal Opportunities and Disabled persons

The Sigma Trust has a Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) arrangement which has been signed up to by all recognised Teacher and Support Staff Trade Unions. This forum meets at least termly or as required following any significant change proposed by the Trust. Where appropriate. The Sigma Trust consults on matters such as policy, Pay, Health, Safety and Welfare or any other identified significant change. The Trust generally provides information to employees by way of email, newsletters and intranet.

There are appropriate communication forums and structured meetings within the Trust's governance organisational structure to ensure the relevant communications take place between the Members and the Trustees and the Trustees and the LGCs.

The Headteachers of all the Trust's academies meet with the key management personnel to ensure all strategic and operational activities are communicated effectively, and each academy has sufficient structures to ensure effective school improvement and communication takes place.

The Sigma Trust's policy is to ensure equality of opportunities is afforded to all staff, students and stakeholders. Training, career development and promotion opportunities are available to all employees.

Through the Trust's values and policies, disabled persons are afforded full and fair consideration in all employment practices and recruitment procedures. In the event of employees becoming disabled during employment, every effort is made to support the employee to continue with their existing role including training and work-based modifications.

Engagement with suppliers, customers and others in a business relationship with the Trust

The Sigma Trust undertakes continuous reviews and communication with all suppliers, partners and community stakeholders. The Trust's adopted Vision and Values ensure that Integrity, Accountability and Respect is fostered in all our objectives and activities. The Trust selects suppliers predominantly from government frameworks, known education and public sector suppliers or via recommendations from other like-minded Trusts or public sector organisations. To ensure the Trust maintains its integrity, robust procurement procedures have been adopted and reviews are completed by internal and external auditors.

The Trust maintains strong business relationships with the local councils, local authority and the Regional Directors' Office, as well as other local and regional education providers and multi academy trusts.

The Trust ensures, via the Executive Team, that individual schools provide appropriate mediums for communication with Staff, Parents and Students, via letters, websites, face to face communication and other literature such as progress reports and parent communication evenings.

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Objectives and Activities Objects and Aims

We have a set of shared values and a common vision that aims to ensure that no child and no school is left behind. The Trust's main objectives are encompassed in our vision Statement and our values:

- Transforming children's futures – working in socially and economically disadvantaged areas and having the ambition to provide the best educational opportunities for the young people we serve.
- Empowering our families - working in partnership and providing support so our children are successful.
- Strengthening communities - our academies work in partnership in order for our children to become young adults who are able to contribute to their community and the wider society.

Vision Statement

The vision for The Sigma Trust is to ensure that no child or academy is left behind. Education should foster in its learners a curiosity to discover who they are and what they are capable of, together with developing the resilience for them to test the boundaries of their abilities, and build the skills necessary to face the future with confidence.

To be "Greater Than The Sum Of Its Parts" symbolises The Sigma Trust. We believe we are stronger and more successful working together than we would be as separate institutions.

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

Our main objectives for our Trust are established within our Vision.

- Being a local family of academies that fully embrace the vision and values of the Trust.
- Ensuring that all of our academies provide the highest standards of education, care, guidance and support.
- Collaborating so that best practice becomes shared practice.
- Celebrating the uniqueness and achievements of each academy.
- Creating centres of educational excellence and innovation to transform lives.
- Ensuring all staff thrive through access to high-quality professional learning and development.
- Aspiring to make working for us the same life-changing experience for staff, as we have for our children, young people and their families.
- Working in collaboration with other stakeholders to enhance the educational experience of children and families in the community.
- Securing financial security so that public money is well spent.

We aim to achieve these objectives by ensuring strong and effective leadership is embedded across all our academies and within the central team. Ensuring every available resource is provided to our leaders and that by working collaboratively no child and no school is left behind.

Public Benefit

The Sigma Trust is a charitable trust which seeks to benefit the public through the pursuit of its stated aims.

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

Achievements and Performance

- Ungraded Ofsted inspection at The Stanway School, July 2023– maintaining its previous Good grading.
- Graded Ofsted inspection at The Colne Community School & College, June 2023– Good in all criteria.
- Graded Ofsted inspection at Philip Morant School & College, September 2023 – Good in all criteria.
- Successfully appointed a new Chair of the Trust Board from 1st September 2023.
- Introduction and embedding of a robust school improvement programme.
- Successfully transferred a Primary GROW centre under Trust management.

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- Appointment of Director of Primary Education into the Trust's School Improvement team for 2023 academic year.
- Founding Partner with Ambition Institute to deliver Initial Teacher Training from September 2024.
- Successfully achieved approval for a grant of £895,746 from the Football Foundation towards a community 3G MUGA to be installed at the Harwich & Dovercourt High School for a project handover planned for Easter 2024.
- Completion and handover of 100KW system of Solar PV on the two Monkwick Schools.
- Replacement of all original wooden framed, single pane glazing at Holland Park Primary School to energy efficient double-glazed units.
- Completion of the phase three investment program at the Colne Community School of c£1M, including full replacement of gas and water infrastructure, upgrade of electrical distribution boards, refurbishment of 18 classrooms including furniture, along with, replacement of selected metal framed single glazed curtain walling.
- Investment of just under £1M on the refurbishment of five Science laboratories and one Food Technology learning environments at St Helena School and Thomas Lord Audley School.
- Investment of over £500,000 at Philip Morant School including full refurbishment of the Humanities teaching base and expansion and refurbishment of the dining area.
- Continuation of investment and resources towards achieving our sustainability aspirations through the installation of additional LED lighting, installation of utility smart meters, replacement of roofing, including additional insulation and solar PV and increasing our recycling awareness and practices.

Key Performance Indicators

The Sigma Trust is committed to observing the importance of performance indicators and to ensure that it continues to strive for both educational and financial excellence.

School	Date Joined Sigma	Status	Age Range	Number on Roll (Oct 22 Census)	% Net Capacity	Ofsted Grade (October 22)	Date of last Inspection
The Sigma Trust Primary Schools							
Monkwick Infant & Nursery School	Sept 2016	Converter	2-7	182	67.4#	Good	Jun-19
Monkwick Junior School	Sept 2016	Re-brokered	7-11	231	77.0#	Good	June 22
Alton Park Junior School	Oct 2019	Re-brokered	7-11	426	88.7	N/A	N/A
Holland Park Primary School	Oct 2019	Re-brokered	4-11	412	98.1	N/A	N/A

Falling student rolls following previous school expansions

	The Sigma Trust Secondary Schools						
Paxman Academy	Sep 2019	Free School	11-16	901	100.1	N/A	N/A
Thomas Lord Audley School	Sept 2016	Converter	11-16	893	106.3	Good	Feb 2020
St Helena School	Sept 2016	Converter	11-16	1016	101.6	Good	Dec 2017
Harwich & Dovercourt High School	Jun 2017	Re-brokered	11-18	1119	86.0	Good	Sep 2021
Colne Community School & College	Jan 2019	Re-brokered	11-18	1268	70.9*	Good	June 2023
The Stanway School	Sept 2016	Converter	11-16	1391	99.3	Good	July 2023
Philip Morant School & College	Jan 2019	Re-brokered	11-18	1739	91.4	Good	Sept 2023
Clacton County High School	Sept 2016	Converter	11-18	1846	79.5*	Good	Sep 2018

* Schools Net capacity increased in 2021 due to planned student population growth in locality

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Financial Key Performance indicators	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Total Income Per Pupil	£6,011	£6,413	£6,214	£6,409	£6,587	£7,143
GAG/Grant income per pupil	£5,120	£5,368	£5,650	£5,569	£5,905	£6,154
Staff costs as % total income	77.83%	80.27%	83.91%	83.24%	83.23%	78.01%
Staff costs as % GAG/Grant Income	91.38%	89.98%	88.01%	87.00%	87.33%	82.45%
Staff costs as % total expenses	73.98%	87.43%	76.73%	77.64%	76.49%	73.48%
Teaching staff costs as% total staff costs	68.72%	75.91%	62.60%	62.80%	59.80%	62.50%
Cash as % total income	23.62%	21.89%	17.23%	17.91%	22.88%	20.85%
Current assets to current liabilities ratio	3.04	3.72	2.65	2.73	2.39	2.17

Staff costs in relation to income have been diluted this year, due to the additional income received from the MSAG and Supplementary grants. This is likely to revert to more normal levels in the future.

Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that the Trust and its academies have adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The Trustees are able to determine this assessment based on the review and evidence of long-term pupil numbers, financial budgeting, cash-flow modelling, condition and liability associated with the capital estates and assessment of the Trusts Strategic Risk Register. For this reason, it 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 Accounting Policies note of the financial statements.

Promoting the Success of the Company

The Trust has adopted a Vision Statement and a set of Values that are transparent and in line with the company's objectives. The Trust's Values are disseminated across the entire organisation and embedded within all activities and decisions made by Trustees, Officers and employees as described in the engagement section of this report. The Trust operates within the framework of openness and transparency and utilises data available from open sources such as the Trust's own websites, Companies House, Ofsted and financial and attainment data from the various .gov websites.

Financial Review

The majority of the Trust's income is obtained from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in the form of recurrent grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received from the ESFA during the period ended 31 August 2023 and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the statement of financial activities.

During the period ended 31 August 2023, recurrent expenditure exceeded income by £994k

In accordance with FRS102, the Academy received an actuarial assessment of the Local Government Pension Scheme surplus. The surplus balance of £436,000 (2022: deficit £8,470,000) is detailed within the supporting notes to the accounts. There has been a substantial reduction in the liability and this improvement in the balance sheet position, which is primarily a result of the significant change in the discount rate linked to high quality corporate bond yields, and the future rate of inflation, which is the key financial assumption required for determining the defined benefit obligation. The actuarial gain arising on the scheme is £9,453,000 which is shown in the Statement of Financial Activities. Further details of the scheme are shown in note 28. The £436,000 asset has been derecognised in these accounts and instead represents an additional movement in other comprehensive income (see note for further details).

All Trust accounting policies have been consulted on and implemented with sound levels of financial authorisation.

The Trustees have spent much of the year closely monitoring and reacting to the significant funding announcements made during the financial year including: the July 2022 Teachers pay award, managing and responding to the significant national inflation rates and cost of living crisis, reversal of the National

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Insurance Health & Social Care Levy and introduction of the much-welcomed Mainstream Schools Additional Grant.

Included within the figures for the financial year is £779k of income provided to the Trust as Recovery Premium and £216k of School Led Tutoring Grant income. This funding was spent providing students with additional tutoring to aid with 'catch up' of lost learning due to the pandemic. All Covid funding has been expended. All School Led Tutoring Grant was either expended or is included within our accruals to be reimbursed back to the Department for Education.

As outlined above, the Trust received £779k in relation to Recovery Premium funding, £3,406k in relation to Pupil Premium funding and £75k in relation to the Primary PE Grant. All academies produced the required action plans identifying planned expenditure and educational impact for these grants. All premium plans were approved and published on the relevant academy website.

The Trust's School Condition Allocation and Devolved Formula Capital for the financial year was around £2,495k. This, along with additional revenue funding and £431k for the one-off Additional School Capital funding has allowed the Trust to continue with its Estates investment strategy by improving the quality of its property portfolio and investment in the ICT equipment refurbishment plan, resulting in the continued improvement and replacement cycle of the Trust's learning environments and resources for our students and staff. This year's fixed asset additions were £4.7m

Along with significant expenditure in excess of £4.2m on the Estates Investment Strategy and £184k on additions and replacement to the ICT equipment stock, a further £800k has been invested in to the Trust's Sustainability Strategy by the installation of over 100KWh of additional Solar PV, £290k on window and roofing upgrades and £500k on pursuing our target of every Trust academy having full LED lighting by 2025.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees consider it essential to maintain a level of useable reserves which is sufficient to meet the requirements of any additional unexpected and unplanned financial expenditure so that the Trust's primary objective is maintained, while at the same time ensuring that it uses its funding to the benefit of students on roll at the time funding is issued.

In deciding the level of reserves for this financial year, Trustees have considered the following:

- Unfunded and unknown inflationary pay awards for staff on Local Government Pay & Conditions.
- A short fall in the teachers' inflationary pay awards for those on Teachers Pay and Conditions.
- Budgetary pressures linked to significant RPI increases across all sectors and industries.
- Short/medium term impact of additional costs linked to recovery of lost learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Reduction in primary aged children entering into three of our four primary schools and, in particular, the nursery placement uptake in Monkwick Infant & Nursery School.
- Additional leadership and strategic over-staffing to support our primary school's improvement journey.
- Growth in the post-16 provision and associated lagged funding.
- Uncertainty and concern over the affordability of the PFI contract over the short and long term at Clacton County High School with the current high RPI inflation rates.
- Medium/long term impact of increasing energy costs at the end of our current contract (Oct 24).
- Unknown or unexpected condition issues within the Trust's estate.
- Educational or safeguarding concerns within one or more of the Trust's academies.
- Uncertainty over future national funding for education.

The Trust is holding free reserves of £6,456k which is an unrestricted general reserve fund. The Trustees have determined its primary schools should achieve a 9% of GAG reserve level and secondary schools 7%. For 2023- 24 the minimum level of reserves required to be held by the Trust has been set at £5,274k.

The unrestricted (designated and general) reserves and the restricted income funds of the Trust have decreased from £9,711k as at 31st August 2022 to £8,723k as at 31st August 2023, which represents a decrease of £988k.

In addition to the above Premium funding, the Trust has also designated funds of £400k for future surface replacement or addition to the current three Trust-owned Multi Use Games Areas. £173k has been committed for immediate ICT expenditure.

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The Trust holds £8,723k of reserves, not including fixed asset or pension reserves, as at 31st August 2023. The Trustees continue to work on strategic plans for the following investment projects planned across the Trust in 2023-2024:

- Additional over staffing capacity in leadership at our Primary Schools.
- Investment for our Decarbonisation and Sustainability Strategy
- Further investment in our IT Strategy
- Continued refurbishment program at the Colne Community School & College.
- Multi-use Games Facility at the Harwich and Dovercourt High School.
- Continued premises improvement programs at both The Thomas Lord Audley School and Philip Morant School & College.
- Continuation of roofing and mechanical infrastructure replacement across all Trust schools
- Identification of RAAC roofing structures across the relevant Trust sites.
- Investment in curriculum resources

The Trustees consider, with the investment in projects listed above and the risks and uncertainties outlined elsewhere in this report, the level of reserves held by the Trust to be appropriate for the size of our organisation.

The balance sheet includes a balance of £nil in relation to the Trust's FRS 102 disclosure of the Local Government Pension Scheme (see pensions note for further details).

The fixed asset reserve fund also stands at £129m as at 31 August 2023, £127m of which could not be realised without disposing of tangible fixed assets.

Investment Policy

The Trustees acknowledge the need to consider maximising any potential for income from reserves held by the Trust. However, it also acknowledges the requirement to ensure these funds are invested in no-risk opportunities.

The Trust uses a bank account which was approved by the Trustees and maintains a balance in that account that is sufficient to cover immediate and forthcoming financial commitments.

Monies surplus to these requirements are invested in £1million deposits on a one-year fixed term account, rolling 3-monthly cycles. The Trust also utilises both a 32-day and 95-day Notice Deposit Accounts during the period. The remaining funds remain in the current account. These deposits are all low-risk options.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Sigma Trust's risk management processes aim to minimise the perceived risk to the Trust. The main current risk of any financial materiality relates to any potential deficit the Trust holds in the Local Government Pension Scheme. Monthly payments to reduce this deficit have been paid throughout the period and the risk has reduced as a result of changes in the market, but these changes could reverse in the future.

The Trustees consider that in addition to the LGPS Pension Scheme, the principal risks and uncertainties facing the Trust are:

- Leadership and Governance structures do not have clear lines of accountability or delegated authority.
- Leaders and those involved in governance do not have the experience or knowledge to have sufficient oversight of the Trust.
- Maintaining standards of education, examination and key stage outcomes.
- Ensuring the Trust has sufficient, current and future, qualified and experienced staff to meet the needs of all academies and the Trust.
- Affordability of energy following the end of our current agreement in October 2024
- Complying with, and ensuring updated knowledge of, changing legislative requirements relating to employment law, GDPR legislation, equality and discrimination guidance, Companies House and HRMC requirements and child protection and safeguarding regulations.
- Future financial viability for pay award recommendations from both the Local Government's and Teacher's Pay Review Bodies.

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- Impact to education is significantly affected by the event of a cyber or ransomware attack.
- Our Trust estate portfolio does not sufficiently meet the needs of our community and staff.
- Medium-term financial impact from the identified RAAC in four of our academies.
- A significant health & safety or compliance issue is not handled correctly or identified in a timely manner.
- Affordability of significant inflationary pressures linked to services/supplies.

The key controls used by the Trust include:

- Detailed terms of reference for all Governance Committees of the Trust.
- Skill audits, training and succession planning programmes are identified for the appointment of Trustees and leaders.
- Formal agendas for the Board and Committees.
- Schemes of Delegation and formal Financial Regulations.
- Timely and accurate financial reporting.
- Formal written policies with clear authorisation and approval levels.
- Policies and procedures required by law to protect the vulnerable.
- High quality appointments to all posts within the Trust.
- Constant reviews of supply contracts, services and agreements.
- Implementations and monitoring of Trust strategies, including, Estate Management, ICT and People & Culture.
- Completion and monitoring of the external tri-annual Health & Safety Audit process
- Robust external, independent audits and reviews.

The Trustees, CEO, SMT, ELT and Executive Committee members continue to monitor the risks that the Trust faces, and addresses these risks through the continued monitoring of the Trust's Risk Management Policy.

Fundraising

Many of the Trust's academies undertake small charity fundraising events led by the student bodies within their schools; these events can take many forms from, non-uniform days or fundraising for national events such as 'Red Nose Day' or BBC Children in Need. The monies are obtained from sponsorship from family and friends or donations directly made by the students and their families. All event contributions are voluntary and no students are excluded from taking part in events by not contributing.

All funds raised from these events are recorded separately within the Trust's accounting system and are paid directly to the identified charity.

The Trust has not received any complaints regarding its charity collections, and does not undertake any process which would intimidate, exclude or apply undue pressure to any person to donate funds. There are no fundraising activities undertaken with external providers.

Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting

UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period	1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023	1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh)	11,020,353	11,957,737
Energy consumption break down (kWh) (optional)		
• gas,	7,065,312	7,699,130
• electricity,	3,832,829	4,182,466
• transport fuel	122,211	76,141
<u>Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>		
Gas consumption	1,292.5	1,450.4
Owned transport – mini-buses	11.8	7.1
<u>Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>		
Purchased electricity	793.7	808.8
<u>Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>		
Business travel in employee owned vehicles	17.7	11.5
Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e	2,115.6	2,232.8

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Intensity ratio Tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.190	0.204
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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 2023 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

Intensity measurement

The chosen intensity measurement ratio is total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e per pupil, the recommended ratio for the sector.

Measures taken to improve energy efficiency

The Trust is committed to reducing emissions and this year has seen the implementation of the following energy efficiency measures:

- More efficient use of heating, upgrades to heating controls
- BMS upgrades to Philip Morant School and The Stanway School
- Improved insulation, new glazing, draught proofing, boiler and hot water servicing/improvements
- Glazing replacement at Holland Park Primary School
- Curtain walling replacement at Colne Community School & College
- Roofing replacement at Alton Park Junior School
- Full mechanical replacement at Colne Community School & College (including HWC)
- LED lighting, new Air Con units, new IT equipment (e.g., laptops or servers)
- LED lighting upgrade as part of refurbishments at all schools
- Full LED lighting upgrade and replacement of old fittings at Harwich & Dovercourt High School
- PV installations at Monkwick Infant School, Monkwick Junior School and Alton Park Junior School

Plans for Future Periods

Following last year's Trustee Self-Evaluation of its Effectiveness workshop, (using the CST's MAT assurance framework), the five-year strategic Intent document was agreed. This Strategic Intent has been further shaped and updated to focus our plans for improvement over the next five years.

Our Key Priorities:

High Quality and Inclusive Education:

- Increase the achievement of pupils, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, to be at least in line with national and aspiring to exceed at national at all key phases.
- Deliver an ambitious and broad curriculum.
- Provide high quality teaching which stimulates our pupils to achieve their very best.
- Ensure pupils are well prepared for their next steps at each transition point.
- Ensure there is an embedded Trust School Improvement Strategy.
- Ofsted inspections judge all of our schools to be at least Good overall.

People and Culture:

- Improve the recruitment and retention of staff.
- Develop staff at all levels by providing opportunities for training which enables individuals to become experts.
- Develop staff at all levels by providing opportunities for career pathways.
- Develop an effective talent management approach so we develop and retain future leaders at all levels.
- Become the employer of choice.

Leadership and Governance:

- Continue to embed, and to communicate the Trust's vision and values to all.
- Achieve our aims through effective leadership and governance which provides clear strategic direction of the Trust, and is able to provide the resources to enable success.
- Ensure all staff and pupils feel safe and supported so that the wellbeing of individuals is at the

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heart of our decision making.

- Strengthen our Trust through growth with a well-balanced mix of schools particularly at primary phase.
- Actively commit to the Trust's social/civic responsibilities to communities.

Finance, Environment and Sustainability:

- Ensure the Trust maintains stable financial dependency based on long term strategic planning.
- Ensure our schools have stimulating learning environments that are well resourced in order to support children's outcomes.
- Ensuring all learners have equity access to the most up- to- date ICT resources to support their learning and success.
- Ensure every pupil and member of staff learns and works in a safe and well-managed environment.
- Ensure our pupils have a future world through our sustainability strategy.

Funds held as Custodian Trustee on behalf of others

During the period covered by this report neither the Trust nor its Trustees held any funds on behalf of any other charitable organisations.

Auditor

Insofar as the Trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the Charitable Company's auditor is unaware.
- 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.

The Trustees' report incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on **7 December 2023** and signed on its behalf by:



Sue Hammond
(Chair of Trustees)

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Scope of responsibility

As Trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that The Sigma 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 Handbook, Competency Framework for Governors, the NGA's 10 questions for multi academy trusts and the CST's MAT Assurance Framework.

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 The Sigma Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are 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:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Nick Pavitt, Chair	8	8
Steve McGrath, Vice Chair	8	8
Lyn Wright, Chief Executive Officer	8	8
Carol Carlsson Browne	8	8
Bradley Powell	6	8
Clive Bull	4	8
Sue Hammond	8	8
Stephen Wyatt	7	8
Jan Atkinson	8	8
Peter Standing	8	8
Adrian Leggett	8	8

The Trustees have continually monitored and amended the Scheme of Delegation and Governance Structures to ensure robust governance and clear lines of delegated responsibilities are established between the Board of Trustees, Trust board sub-committees and the Local Governance Committees.

Following last years' Governance Self-evaluation and the subsequent restructuring of a number of LGCs, this year has been utilised as a year of embedding and monitoring. In addition to this, the Trust has also focused on:

- Succession planning to ensure strength at all levels of governance.
- Increased Trustee development and training through the Confederation of School Trusts development and resourcing.
- Embedding the work of the Safeguarding and SEND Trustee links.
- Increased monitoring of governance at local level.
- Dissolved the ITT Strategic Committee as at 31st August 2023.

For the Financial year 2022-23 the Board consists of the following sub-committees:

- Trust Finance Committee
- Trust Audit & Risk Committee
- Trust Standards Committee
- Trust ITT Strategic Committee (ceased as of 31st August 2023)
- Trust People & Culture Committee (autumn 2022)
- Combined LGC for Alton Park Junior School and Holland Park Primary School
- Combined LGC for Clacton County High School and The Colne Community School & College (established spring 2022)

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- St Helena School LGC
- Combined LGC for The Stanway School and Thomas Lord Audley School
- Combined LGC for Monkwick Infant & Nursery School and Monkwick Junior School
- Philip Morant School & College LGC (autumn 2022)
- Interim Executive Committee Paxman Academy (autumn 2022)
- Harwich & Dovercourt High School LGC

The Trustees undertook a full self-evaluation utilising the CST's MAT Assurance framework and the DfE's Academy Trust Governance during the accounting period. Following this review, an Action Plan has been produced identifying areas for improvement.

During the year the founding Chair of Trustees notified the Board of his intention to retire from this role on 31st August 2023; a review took place with Sue Hammond being appointed as Chair of Trustees Designate. The appropriate Chair Suitability checks have been completed with the Department for Education.

Part of the Governance Action Plan established from the Board's Self-Evaluation in 2022, has led to a number of Trustees undertaking targeted programmes of training from both qualified central leaders and external training via the Confederation of Schools Trusts, these sessions have included:

- Chair of Trustee Development Programme
- Development of a Trust People Strategy
- SEND and Pupil/Sport Premium Funding
- Effective Management of Complaints
- Safeguarding; Attendance and Behaviour

The Trust Board receives monthly management reports from the Finance Officers along with regular updates on all finance leases and contracts entered into over £5k, cash flow forecasts, payroll KPIs, Related Party Transactions and significant variances to budgets.

The Trustees ensure Declarations of Interest forms are completed each year from all Trustees, LGC members, senior leaders and other identified staff who are engaged in significant procurement activities. The Trustees continually review the contents of the Business Interests' register through termly management reports and ensures declarations of interest is an agenda item on all governance meeting agendas. All declared interests are 'flagged' on the Finance Management System which then requires appropriate overrides if approved to ensure reporting is completed appropriately. Any RPT is recorded in the monthly Management Accounts.

The following training sessions were identified from the previously completed skills audit and were delivered in the 2022-2023 academic year:

- SEND - The role of SEND in schools and responsibilities of the SEND local governor.
- Ofsted - The role of local Governors in relation to Ofsted inspections and how to check school preparedness.
- Evaluating the impact of PPG and Sports Premium – local Governors' roles in overseeing and monitoring impact of both the pupil premium grant and sports funding.
- The Curriculum - local Governors' roles in relation to the school's curriculum.
- Safeguarding – annual Safeguarding training and the role of the LGC in Safeguarding.
- Attendance & Behaviour – Understanding data and challenging schools on the information.
- Complaints - dealing with parental complaints and compliance to the Complaints Procedure Policy.

As reported in last year's Trustees Report, the Trustees commissioned an external consultant to undertake a Governance review across the Trust. This process was started in the summer term of 2023 and will be completed during the 2023-24 financial year.

The Finance Committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. The Committee met 3 times in the financial year and undertook the following key actions.

- Received monthly management accounts and notes taken from a number of subsequent monthly Google-Meets for detailed questioning and clarification sessions with Trust Officers.
- Scrutinised management accounts at each and every meeting.
- Agreed to expenditure within its delegated power and made recommendations to the full Board
- Reviewed and monitored use of expenditure and levels of Trust Reserves.
- Received and challenged Trust benchmarking documents and various ESFA financial returns.
- Received reports on the current and forecast student numbers.

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- Monitored the use and impact of the School Condition Allocation and schools' Devolved Formula Capital.
- Received regular updates and recommended approval of expenditure following the sale of The Grange.
- Received regular updates and reports on numerous projects and partnership agreements being negotiated by senior officers.

Attendance at meetings of the Finance Committee in the 2022-23 year was as follows.

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Adrian Leggett (Chair)	3	3
Bradley Powell	1	3
Steve McGrath (Vice Chair)	3	3
Lyn Wright (CEO & Accounting Officer)	3	3
Clive Bull	3	3
Carol Carlsson Browne	3	3
Peter Standing	2	2

The Audit and Risk Committee is a sub-committee of the main board of Trustees. The Committee met 3 times in the financial year and undertook the following key actions.

- Agreed and challenged the risk profile scoring of the Trust's Risk Management Policy.
- Implemented a revised approach to Risk Management via enhanced ownership through Trust Committees.
- Scrutinised and challenged the Internal Auditor's reports.
- Received and challenged the outcome of the Audit Management Letter and subsequent Trust Action Plan.
- Received reports on HR matters including review of any ATH defined Special Payments.
- Received and challenged reports from the Trust's Chief Network Officers on ICT equipment condition.
- Agreed and challenged a suite of policies and reports linked to GDPR legislation and insurance claims.
- Agreed to a revised approach for 2023-24 to undertake enhanced Health & Safety Monitoring.

Attendance at meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee in the 2022-23 year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Steve McGrath (Chair)	3	3
Bradley Powell	2	3
Clive Bull	2	3
Sue Hammond	3	3
Peter Standing	2	3

Lyn Wright (CEO and Accounting Officer) attended the Audit and Risk Committee in her capacity as CEO and not as a Trustee.

The Standards Committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. The Committee met 4 times in the financial year and undertook the following key actions.

- Received and challenged reports from the Director of Education on the Trust's school improvement offer.
- Received and challenged reports from the Primary Executive Lead on the performance and school improvement offer for our primary and junior academies.
- Received and challenged reports from the Director of Safeguarding & Pastoral Care on the Trust's attendance, behavioural and safeguarding analytics and improvement strategies.
- Received and challenged reports from the Director of School Improvement (SEND & Disadvantaged) on the Trust's management, monitoring and impact of the SEND & Disadvantaged strategies.
- Received and challenged reports from the Director of Performance & Review on the Trust's Ofsted readiness, Ofsted outcomes and School Improvement strategies.
- Received and challenged outcome and progress data on school examinations and PPE assessments.
- Received and challenged school Pupil Premium Grant plans, Covid 19 recovery plans and the outcomes from independent reviews carried out on the impact and quality of education.
- Received and challenged reports and updates from academy Ofsted reports and Trust action plans.

Attendance during the year at meetings of the Standards Committee in the 2022-23 year was as follows:

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Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Stephen Wyatt (Chair)	4	4
Carol Carlsson Browne	3	4
Adrian Leggett	1	4
Nick Pavitt	3	4
Lyn Wright	4	4
Jan Atkinson	4	4

The ITT Strategic Committee is a sub-committee of the main board of Trustees. The Committee met 3 times in the financial year and undertook the following key actions.

- Reviewed and adopted the 2022-2023 Development Plan.
- Received and challenged reports from the Programme Director on the performance, finances and offer for the scheme.
- Received and challenged reports on quality assurance visits and other scheme improvement visit reports and reviews.
- Received and approved updates and reports on the closure of the ITT Scheme.
- Noted the formal Closure of the North Essex Teacher Training Scheme with effect from 31st August 2023.

Attendance at meetings of the ITT Strategic Committee in the 2022-23 year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Carol Carlsson Browne (Chair)	3	3
Sue Hammond	3	3
Lyn Wright	3	3

The People & Culture Committee is a sub-committee of the main board of Trustees. The Committee met 3 times in the financial year and undertook the following key actions.

- Reviewed and challenged the Trust's People & Culture Strategy.
- Scrutinised and challenged the Trust's employment-related metrics.
- Received reports on union relations and the outcomes of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC).
- Received reports on staffing structures and key HR matters.
- Agreed and challenged a suite of policies and reports linked to employment practices and pay.

Attendance at meetings of the HR Committee in the 2022-23 year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Jan Atkinson (Chair)	3	3
Nick Pavitt	3	3
Bradley Powell	3	3
Peter Standing	2	3

Review of value for money

As Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive Officer has a 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 where appropriate. The Accounting Officer for the Academy Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- Working in partnership with Essex County Council to review and ultimately see an increase in the financial settlement provided to the Trust for the delivery of the Secondary Grow Provision. In addition, the Accounting Officer has also undertaken the primary responsibility for the delivery of the Primary Grow provision based at Monkwick Junior School realising cost efficiencies allowing additional investment into staffing and targeted support.

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- Undertaken a review and restructure of the central estates team to implement a new role of Estates Compliance Manager and also increasing the teams FTE by one additional post to provide further centralised reporting, coordination and oversight of Health & Safety compliance, thus ensuring all statutory inspections, servicing, auditing and maintenance reports are reviewed, actioned and reported to leaders as required.
- Undertaken a number of procurement activities and tenders for the refurbishment, upgrade and enhancement of our Estates' facilities including: new roofing covering, including additional insulation and installation of new Solar PV, significant investment in the Colne Community School to ensure the utility infrastructure does not fail due to end of life.
- Continued investment in to the Science curriculum and facilities.
- Worked closely with the Football Foundation, Essex Football Association and other local community groups to successfully be awarded a 74.91% grant for the sum of £895,746 for the future installation of a new 3G floodlit school and community football pitch.

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 The Sigma Trust's 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 the Sigma Trust for the year 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023 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 Sigma Trust's significant risks that has been in place for the year 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

The risk and control framework

The Academy Trust's system of internal financial 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 Finance 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 has decided to buy-in internal audit services from RSM UK.

The internal auditor's role includes giving advice on financial and other matters and performing a range of checks on the Academy Trust's financial and other systems. In particular, the checks carried out in the current period included:

- A review of the Trust's Capital Funding Framework – RSM UK
- A review of the Trust's Income & Debtors controls – RSM UK
- A Review of the Trust's Health & Safety Framework – RSM UK
- A Review of Safeguarding within the Central Operations Team - External reviewer
- A review of the Use of Technology - Moxton Education

The approved schedule of works and key areas of review listed above have been fully completed and reported to the Audit & Risk Committee during the financial year.

The RSM UK findings reports listed above were presented to our Audit & Risk Committee throughout the year; the internal audit service reports to the Board of Trustees through the Audit and Risk committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Trustees' financial responsibilities and prepares an annual summary report to the committee outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to help the

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committee consider actions and assess year on year progress.

The internal auditor has delivered the schedule of work as planned, and no material control issues have arisen as a result of the work undertaken.

Review of effectiveness

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

- Reviews by the internal audit Service RSM UK and other specialist advisors.
- The work of the external auditor.
- The School Resource Management self-assessment tool.
- Findings of the Finance Committee.
- Findings of the Audit & Risk Committee.
- Review and completion of the revised Academies Risk 'rubrics profiles'.
- The work of the Trust's Chief Operations and Finance Officer, the Trust's Management Accountant, Director of Estates and Compliance, as well as other Senior Leadership Team members from within The Sigma Trust's academies who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.
- The work of the executive managers within the Academy Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.
- Correspondence from the ESFA.

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the Finance Committee and Audit and Risk Committee and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 7/12/23 and signed on their behalf by:


Sue Hammond
Chair of Trustees


Lyn Wright
Accounting Officer

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STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

As accounting officer of The Sigma Trust I have considered my responsibility to notify the academy Board of Trustees and the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding including for estates safety and management, under the funding agreement in place between the academy and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2022, including responsibilities for estates safety and management, as far as funding permits.

I confirm that I and the academy Board of Trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of all funds by the academy, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the academy's funding agreement and the Academy Trust Handbook 2022.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or funding 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 ESFA.

L.A. Wright

Lyn Wright
Accounting Officer

Date: *7 December 2023*

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**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, 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 . 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 of the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023;
- make judgments 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;
- 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 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 and signed on its behalf by:



.....

Sue Hammond
Chair of Trustees

Date: 7 December 2023

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SIGMA TRUST

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Sigma Trust (the 'academy') for the year ended 31 August 2023 which comprise the Statement of financial activities, the Balance sheet, the Statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland', the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the academy's affairs as at 31 August 2023 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; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

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 Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the academy in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council'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'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.

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SIGMA TRUST (CONTINUED)

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual report other than the financial statements and our Auditors' 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.

Opinion 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 Strategic report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- the Trustees' report and the Strategic report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
SIGMA TRUST (CONTINUED)**

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the academy for the purposes of company law) 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'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 academy or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SIGMA TRUST (CONTINUED)

Auditors' 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 Auditors' 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.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

The engagement partner ensured the engagement team had the necessary skills and knowledge to identify non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Trust and for those that are most significant, we enquired into how management ensures compliance is maintained.

We identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the DfE/ESFA regulatory industry that the Academy operates in. This affects the ability to continue trading as an Academy Trust. Other relevant laws and regulations of note include health and safety.

Enquiry and review of the entity's transactions was undertaken to highlight any instances of penalties, fines or legal activity which could suggest non-compliance with laws and regulations. There was no contradictory evidence found.

We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements including the Companies Act 2006, Accounts Directions and Charities SORP.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to the override of delegated authorities and the misappropriation of grant funding.

In response, we incorporated testing of procurement and expenditure and any other entries at risk of falling outside of delegated authorities.

Scrutiny of unusual transactions and analytical procedures were used to help identify risk factors in monies received and expended during the year.

It is also stated, as a reminder, that the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the Trust.

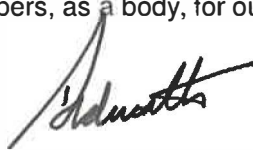
A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Auditors' report.

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
SIGMA TRUST (CONTINUED)**

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the academy'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 academy's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' 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 academy and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Daniel Aldworth (Senior statutory auditor)

for and on behalf of

Griffin Chapman

Chartered Accountants

Statutory Auditors

4 & 5 The Cedars

Apex 12

Old Ipswich Road

Colchester

Essex

CO7 7QR

Date: 15 December 2023

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY TO THE SIGMA TRUST AND THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 25 September 2023 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by The Sigma Trust during the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

This report is made solely to The Sigma Trust and ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to The Sigma Trust and ESFA 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 The Sigma Trust and ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of The Sigma Trust's accounting officer and the reporting accountant

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of The Sigma Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 20 December 2018 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2022, 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 Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023. 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 year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY TO THE SIGMA TRUST AND THE EDUCATION & SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY (CONTINUED)

Approach

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountant of Academy Trusts issued by ESFA. We performed a limited assurance engagement as defined 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's income and expenditure.

The work undertaken comprised:

- a) Analytical review as part of the consideration of whether general activities of the Academy Trust are within the academy trusts framework of authorities
- b) Confirmation that items have been appropriately authorised in accordance with the academy trust's delegated authorities. Confirmation that the internal delegations have been approved by the governing body, and conform to the limits set by the Department for Education.
- c) Performing of sample testing of expenditure & procurement and review against specific terms of grant funding within the funding agreement.
- d) Review and testing of the systems surrounding the management of related party transactions.
- e) Consideration of governance activities in line with ESFA expectations.

The extent of work performed was based upon our professional judgement, informed by the assessment of the risk of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance.

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggest in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.



Daniel Aldworth Reporting Accountant
Griffin Chapman
Chartered Accountants

4 & 5 The Cedars
Apex 12
Old Ipswich Road
Colchester
Essex
CO7 7QR

Date: 15 December 2023

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	3	6	-	3,926	3,932	12,826
Other trading activities		1,013	2,853	-	3,866	2,979
Investments	6	121	-	-	121	9
Charitable activities	4	-	75,298	-	75,298	68,495
Teaching schools		-	290	-	290	383
Total income		1,140	78,441	3,926	83,507	84,692
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities		61	80,126	3,797	83,984	77,767
Teaching schools		-	513	4	517	434
Total expenditure		61	80,639	3,801	84,501	78,201
Net income/(expenditure)		1,079	(2,198)	125	(994)	6,491
Transfers between funds	21	(1,253)	837	416	-	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		(174)	(1,361)	541	(994)	6,491
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	28	-	9,453	-	9,453	42,484
Pension surplus not recognised	28	-	(436)	-	(436)	-
Net movement in funds		(174)	7,656	541	8,023	48,975
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		6,630	(5,389)	128,324	129,565	80,590
Net movement in funds		(174)	7,656	541	8,023	48,975

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
(CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Total funds carried forward	6,456	2,267	128,865	137,588	129,565

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

The notes on pages 36 to 75 form part of these financial statements.

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 07926573

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £000	2022 £000
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	15	127,203	126,396
		<u>127,203</u>	<u>126,396</u>
Current assets			
Stocks	16	40	42
Debtors	17	2,628	3,530
Cash at bank and in hand		16,614	16,466
		<u>19,282</u>	<u>20,038</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	18	(8,873)	(8,360)
Net current assets		<u>10,409</u>	<u>11,678</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>137,612</u>	<u>138,074</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	19	(24)	(39)
Net assets excluding pension asset / liability		<u>137,588</u>	<u>138,035</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme asset / liability	28	-	(8,470)
Total net assets		<u><u>137,588</u></u>	<u><u>129,565</u></u>
Funds of the academy			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	21	128,865	128,324
Restricted income funds	21	2,267	3,081
		<u>131,132</u>	<u>131,405</u>
Restricted funds excluding pension asset	21	131,132	131,405
Pension reserve	21	-	(8,470)
Total restricted funds	21	<u>131,132</u>	<u>122,935</u>
Unrestricted income funds	21	<u>6,456</u>	<u>6,630</u>
Total funds		<u><u>137,588</u></u>	<u><u>129,565</u></u>

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 07926573

BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

The financial statements on pages 31 to 75 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on
7 December 2023 and are signed on their behalf, by:


.....
Sue Hammond
(Chair of Trustees)


.....
Lyn Wright
(Trustee)

The notes on pages 36 to 75 form part of these financial statements.

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

	Note	2023 £000	2022 £000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	23	710	2,842
Cash flows from investing activities	24	(562)	1,514
		<u>148</u>	<u>4,356</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		148	4,356
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		16,466	12,110
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	25, 26	16,614	16,466

The notes on pages 36 to 75 form part of these financial statements

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting policies

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

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements of the academy, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared under the historic 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 accounts 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 2022 to 2023 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

The Sigma Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

1.2 Going concern

The Trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the academy 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 has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the academy's ability to continue as a going concern, thus they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.3 Income

All incoming resources are recognised when the academy 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 year for which it is receivable and any abatement in respect of the year is deducted from income and recognised as a liability.

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.

- **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 year it is receivable and to the extent the academy has provided the goods or services.

- **Donated fixed assets (excluding transfers on conversion or into the academy)**

Where the donated good is a fixed asset it is measured at fair value, unless it is impractical to measure this reliably, in which case the cost of the item to the donor should be used. The gain is recognised as 'Income from Donations and Capital Grants' and a corresponding amount is included in the appropriate fixed asset category and depreciated over the useful economic life in accordance with the academy's accounting policies.

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.4 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 allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

- **Charitable activities**

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

1.5 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the academy; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

1.6 Taxation

The academy 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 is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Part 11, chapter 3 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.

1.7 Intangible assets

Intangible assets costing £10,000 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably.

Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment.

Amortisation is provided on intangible assets at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset on a straight-line basis over its expected useful life.

The estimated useful lives are as follows:

Amortisation is provided on the following basis:

Computer software	- 25% and 33.3% straight line
-------------------	-------------------------------

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.8 Tangible fixed assets

Assets costing £10,000 or more 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 requiring 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 other than freehold land and assets under construction, at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset on a straight-line basis over its expected useful life, as follows:

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Freehold property	- 2% straight line (10% straight line on MUGA)
Long-term leasehold property	- 2% straight line
Furniture and equipment	- 20% straight line (5% straight line on solar panels)
Computer equipment	- 25% straight line
Motor vehicles	- 20% straight line

Assets in the course of construction are included at cost. Depreciation on these assets is not charged until they are brought into use and reclassified to freehold or leasehold land and buildings.

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.

1.9 Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks. Cost includes all direct costs and an appropriate proportion of fixed and variable overheads.

1.10 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

1.11 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account, other than £9.15 million on maturity periods between one and eleven months.

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.12 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 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.

1.13 Financial instruments

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

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 17. 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 as detailed in notes 18 and 19. 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.

1.14 Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

THE SIGMA TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.15 Pensions

Retirement benefits to employees of the academy are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS") and the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS"). These are defined benefit schemes.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the academy 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 on the basis of quadrennial valuations using a prospective unit credit method. 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 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 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 operating surplus 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.

1.16 Agency arrangements

The Academy Trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 bursary funds from ESFA.

For the bursary funds, payments received from ESFA and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the statement of financial activities as the Trust does not have control over the charitable application of funds. The Trust can use up to 5% of the allocation towards its own administration costs and this is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

For North Essex Teacher Training, bursary payments received from DfE and subsequent disbursement to students are excluded from the statement of financial activities as the Trust does not have control over the charitable application of funds.

The funds received and paid and any balances held for all agency arrangements are disclosed in notes to the financial statements.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.17 Fund accounting

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

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

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

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.

1.18 PFI (Private Finance Initiative) premises

The Academy Trust includes an academy which has a PFI contract for the use of its school premises, where the responsibility for maintaining and repairing the buildings lies with the PFI contractor. The rights and ownership of the premises lies with Essex County Council and the school does not recognise any asset or liability on the balance sheet. The school has the right to occupy the school premises under the terms of the contract which expires in 2035.

Payments are made during the life of the contract and are charged to revenue as payable.
PFI credits are treated as general revenue.
The PFI arrangement is recognised in other financial commitments at note 30.

1.19 Redundancy costs

Redundancy costs and termination payments are charged to the income statement in the year in which an irrevocable commitment is made to incur the costs.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

2. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

Estimates and judgments 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 28, will impact 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 asset/liability at 31 August 2023. 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. This year the present value reflects a short-term allowance for inflation to the impact of the current high inflation rates.

Critical areas of judgment:

The Academy Trust includes an academy which is subject to Private Finance Initiative arrangement for its use of the school premises. The Trustees have adopted the accounting treatment in note 30 where this arrangement is recognised as a financial commitment.

Judgements have been made on the fixed asset policies over the lives of assets acquired on academies transferring in to the Academy Trust, in that they will continue to be used following transfer to The Sigma Trust.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

3. Income from donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	<i>Total funds 2022 £000</i>
Donations	6	18	24	8,958
Capital Grants	-	3,908	3,908	3,868
Total 2023	6	3,926	3,932	12,826
<i>Total 2022</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>12,822</i>	<i>12,826</i>	

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

4. Funding for the academy's charitable activities

	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	<i>Total funds 2022 £000</i>
Educational operations			
DfE/ESFA grants			
General Annual Grant	64,692	64,692	60,864
Other DfE/ESFA grants			
Pupil Premium	3,406	3,406	3,136
UFSM	107	107	96
Supplementary Grant	1,861	1,861	766
Rates Reclaim	336	336	322
PE Grant	75	75	76
Teachers Pay and Pension Grant	127	127	165
School Led Tutoring Grant	216	216	227
Mainstream Schools Additional Grant	956	956	-
Other DfE Group grants	909	909	-
	<hr/> 72,685	<hr/> 72,685	<hr/> 65,652
Other Government grants			
Local Authority SEN Income	1,492	1,492	1,094
Other Government Grants	1,121	1,121	1,092
	<hr/> 2,613	<hr/> 2,613	<hr/> 2,186
COVID-19 additional funding (DfE/ESFA)			
Catch-up Premium	-	-	493
Summer Schools Programme	-	-	33
	<hr/> -	<hr/> -	<hr/> 526
COVID-19 additional funding (non-DfE/ESFA)			
COVID mass test funding	-	-	131
	<hr/> -	<hr/> -	<hr/> 131
	<hr/> 75,298	<hr/> 75,298	<hr/> 68,495
	<hr/> 75,298	<hr/> 75,298	<hr/> 68,495
	<hr/> <hr/> 68,495	<hr/> <hr/> 68,495	<hr/> <hr/>
<i>Total 2022</i>	<hr/> <hr/> 68,495	<hr/> <hr/> 68,495	<hr/> <hr/>

THE SIGMA TRUST
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

4. Funding for the academy's charitable activities (continued)

The academy had £136,762 funding brought forward and received £785,293 for catch-up premium and recovery funding. Costs incurred in respect of this funding totalled £922,053. There is no balance carried forward.

5. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Lettings income	467	-	467	357
Music services income	-	13	13	23
Trip income	-	891	891	305
Catering income	-	1,945	1,945	1,745
Other income	546	4	550	549
Total 2023	1,013	2,853	3,866	2,979
<i>Total 2022</i>	<i>866</i>	<i>2,113</i>	<i>2,979</i>	

6. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Bank interest	121	121	9
<i>Total 2022</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>9</i>	

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

7. Expenditure

	Staff Costs 2023 £000	Premises 2023 £000	Other 2023 £000	Total 2023 £000	<i>Total 2022 £000</i>
Educational operations:					
Direct costs	46,630	3,797	6,873	57,300	50,497
Allocated support costs	15,059	5,877	5,748	26,684	27,270
Teaching school	392	25	100	517	434
Total 2023	62,081	9,699	12,721	84,501	78,201
<i>Total 2022</i>	<i>59,815</i>	<i>7,917</i>	<i>10,469</i>	<i>78,201</i>	

8. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2023 £000	Support costs 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	<i>Total funds 2022 £000</i>
Educational operations	57,300	26,684	83,984	77,767
<i>Total 2022</i>	<i>50,497</i>	<i>27,270</i>	<i>77,767</i>	

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

8. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

Analysis of direct costs

	Educational operations 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	<i>Total funds 2022 £000</i>
Staff costs	46,630	46,630	42,846
Depreciation	3,797	3,797	2,226
Other educational services	218	218	534
Education supplies	2,321	2,321	1,689
Examination fees	923	923	863
Staff development	227	227	239
Educational consultancy	1,636	1,636	856
Other direct costs	279	279	174
Security and transport	224	224	195
Technology costs	1,045	1,045	875
	<u>57,300</u>	<u>57,300</u>	<u>50,497</u>
<i>Total 2022</i>	<u>50,497</u>	<u>50,497</u>	

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

8. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

Analysis of support costs

	Educational operations 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000	<i>Total funds 2022 £000</i>
Pension finance cost	285	285	737
Staff costs	15,059	15,059	16,648
Recruitment and support	228	228	194
Maintenance of premises and equipment	5,140	5,140	4,408
Cleaning	496	496	420
Rent and Rates	378	378	362
Insurance	264	264	240
Security and transport	80	80	58
Catering	1,999	1,999	1,590
Technology costs	206	206	209
Utilities	1,553	1,553	1,489
Legal fees - other	21	21	7
Other support costs	929	929	871
Audit and accountancy	46	46	37
	<u>26,684</u>	<u>26,684</u>	<u>27,270</u>
<i>Total 2022</i>	<u>27,270</u>	<u>27,270</u>	

9. Net income/(expenditure)

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2023 £000	<i>2022 £000</i>
Operating lease rentals	260	228
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	3,799	3,492
Gain on disposal of fixed assets	-	(1,261)
Fees paid to auditors for:		
- audit	27	27
- other services	14	14

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

10. Staff

a. Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Wages and salaries	45,865	<i>41,524</i>
Social security costs	4,443	<i>4,063</i>
Pension costs	10,665	<i>13,531</i>
	60,973	<i>59,118</i>
Agency staff costs	1,108	<i>681</i>
Staff restructuring costs	-	<i>16</i>
	62,081	<i>59,815</i>

Staff restructuring costs comprise:

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Severance payments	3	<i>16</i>
	3	<i>16</i>

b. Special staff severance payments

There is one non-statutory/non-contractual severance payment in the year of £3,000 (2022: £nil).

c. Staff numbers

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

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	No.	<i>No.</i>
Teachers	744	<i>699</i>
Administration and support	925	<i>787</i>
Management	13	<i>13</i>
	1,682	<i>1,499</i>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

10. Staff (continued)

c. Staff numbers (continued)

The average headcount expressed as full-time equivalents was:

	2023 No.	2022 No.
Teachers	652	633
Administration and support	561	531
Management	10	12
	1,223	1,176

d. Higher paid staff

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

	2023 No.	2022 No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	39	29
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	21	17
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	7	3
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	5	3
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	3	3
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	1	-
In the band £120,001 - £130,000	-	1
In the band £130,001 - £140,000	1	1
In the band £150,001 - £160,000	1	-
	1	-

e. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the academy comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the academy was £680,282 (2022 £788,933).

11. Central services

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

- Education services
- Human resources
- Financial services
- Legal and Governance services

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

11. Central services (continued)

- Operations

The academy charges for these services on the following basis:

The Trust charges for these services at 4.5% (2022: 4.5%) of the General Annual Grant (including 16-19 allocation for relevant schools) but excluding Bursary and PFI income and including Supplementary Grant. There is a higher figure for Stanway School, this year and in 2022, due to the central service charge including the school's MPPFL (Minimum per pupil funding level) funding.

The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Clacton County High School	511	<i>454</i>
Colne Community School and College	321	<i>308</i>
Harwich and Dovercourt High School	334	<i>305</i>
Monwick Infants School	41	<i>42</i>
Monkwick Junior School	54	<i>49</i>
Philip Morant School and College	472	<i>441</i>
St Helena School	275	<i>256</i>
The Stanway School	351	<i>340</i>
Thomas Lord Audley School	236	<i>222</i>
Alton Park Junior School	97	<i>96</i>
Holland Park Primary School	87	<i>80</i>
Paxman Academy	194	<i>134</i>
Total	2,973	<i>2,727</i>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

12. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

One or more Trustees has been paid remuneration or has received other benefits from an employment with the academy. The principal and other staff Trustees only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of principal and staff members under their contracts of employment. The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

		2023	<i>2022</i>
		£000	<i>£000</i>
Lyn Wright Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer	Remuneration	155 - 160	<i>130 - 135</i>
	Pension contributions paid	35 - 40	<i>30 - 35</i>

During the year, retirement benefits were accruing to 1 Trustees (*2022 - 1*) in respect of defined benefit pension schemes.

During the year ended 31 August 2023, travel expenses totalling £201 were reimbursed or paid directly to 2 Trustees (*2022 - £NIL*).

13. Trustees' and Officers' insurance

The academy has opted into the Department of Education's risk protection arrangement (RPA), an alternative to insurance where UK government funds cover losses that arise. This scheme protects Trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy business, and provides cover up to £10,000,000. It is not possible to quantify the Trustees and officers indemnity element from the overall cost of the RPA scheme membership.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

14. Intangible assets

	Computer software £000
At 1 September 2022	27
Disposals	(27)
	<hr/>
At 31 August 2023	-
	<hr/>
At 1 September 2022	27
On disposals	(27)
	<hr/>
At 31 August 2023	-
	<hr/>
Net book value	
At 31 August 2023	-
	<hr/> <hr/>
<i>At 31 August 2022</i>	-
	<hr/> <hr/>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

15. Tangible fixed assets

Cost or valuation	Freehold property £000	Long-term leasehold property £000	Assets under construction £000	Fixtures and fittings £000	Computer equipment £000	Motor vehicles £000	Total £000
At 1 September 2022	107,423	26,675	2,982	1,650	3,511	26	142,267
Additions	990	344	2,717	347	330	-	4,728
Disposals	-	-	(119)	(323)	(1,680)	-	(2,122)
Transfers between classes	4,673	-	(4,673)	-	-	-	-
At 31 August 2023	113,086	27,019	907	1,674	2,161	26	144,873
Depreciation							
At 1 September 2022	10,470	2,149	-	1,099	2,137	16	15,871
Charge for the year	2,475	602	-	204	513	5	3,799
On disposals	-	-	-	(320)	(1,680)	-	(2,000)
At 31 August 2023	12,945	2,751	-	983	970	21	17,670

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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15. Tangible fixed assets (continued)

	Freehold property £000	Long-term leasehold property £000	Assets under construction £000	Fixtures and fittings £000	Computer equipment £000	Motor vehicles £000	Total £000
Net book value							
At 31 August 2023	100,141	24,268	907	691	1,191	5	127,203
At 31 August 2022	96,953	24,526	2,982	551	1,374	10	126,396

The Trustees have based their valuation of the buildings on the insurance value of the premises, discounted to take account of the age of the building at the time of conversion to academy status. The Trustees are not aware of any material changes to this valuation. For the purposes of these financial statements the land is deemed to have no commercial value.

Assets transferred on joining the Trust have been valued at their net book values at the date of conversion. Depreciation on these transferred assets continues to be charged on a straight line basis on original cost to depreciate them over their remaining useful lives.

Four of the Trust's schools occupy leasehold property under 125 year leases with Essex County Council at peppercorn rent.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

16. Stocks

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Finished goods and goods for resale	40	<i>42</i>
	<u>40</u>	<u><i>42</i></u>

17. Debtors

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	12	<i>42</i>
Other debtors	872	<i>1,475</i>
Prepayments and accrued income	1,094	<i>907</i>
Tax recoverable	650	<i>1,106</i>
	<u>2,628</u>	<u><i>3,530</i></u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

18. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Loans	15	<i>15</i>
ESFA creditor: abatement of GAG	123	<i>-</i>
Trade creditors	3,705	<i>4,320</i>
Other taxation and social security	1,107	<i>1,002</i>
Other creditors	1,424	<i>1,167</i>
Accruals and deferred income	2,499	<i>1,856</i>
	8,873	<i>8,360</i>
	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Deferred income		
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	856	<i>514</i>
Resources deferred during the year	1,135	<i>856</i>
Amounts released from previous periods	(856)	<i>(514)</i>
Deferred income at 31 August 2023	1,135	<i>856</i>

Deferred income relates to Universal infant free school meals, trip income, nursery fees, rates funding received in advance, and ESFA grant clawbacks.

19. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Loans	24	<i>39</i>

Colne Community School has a Salix loan for £62,072 in relation to a CIF grant awarded in 2014/15 to replace windows, to be repaid over 8 years interest free commencing in March 2017. Repayments commenced in 2017/18. The repayments falling due within one year of £7,759. The loan is repayable within 5 years.

Harwich and Dovercourt High School has a Salix loan of £44,992 in relation to a CIF grant awarded in 2017/18 to replace windows, repayable over 8 years interest free. Repayments commenced in 2018/19. The repayments falling due within one year are £5,624 for this loan. The loan is repayable within 5 years.

Alton Park School has an interest free Salix loan relating to a water distribution project, repayable over 8 years, interest free. Repayments commenced in September 2021. The repayments falling due within one year are £1,680. The balance due after 5 years payable by instalments is £1,709.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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20. Financial instruments

	2023 £000	<i>2022</i> <i>£000</i>
Financial assets		
Financial assets measured at fair value through income and expenditure	16,614	<i>16,466</i>
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	884	<i>1,518</i>
	<u>17,498</u>	<u><i>17,984</i></u>
	2023 £000	<i>2022</i> <i>£000</i>
Financial liabilities		
Other financial liabilities measured at fair value through income and expenditure	<u>(6,655)</u>	<u><i>(6,542)</i></u>

Financial assets measured at fair value through income and expenditure comprise bank and cash balances.

Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost comprise debtors excluding prepayments and tax recoverable.

Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost comprise creditors excluding taxation and social security and deferred income.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

21. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (Losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2023 £000
Unrestricted funds						
Designated funds						
MUGA replacement	184	-	-	116	-	300
Capital projects	975	-	-	(975)	-	-
Football Foundation Grant contribution	-	-	-	100	-	100
	<u>1,159</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(759)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>400</u>
General funds						
General Funds - all funds	<u>5,471</u>	<u>1,140</u>	<u>(61)</u>	<u>(494)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,056</u>
Total Unrestricted funds	<u>6,630</u>	<u>1,140</u>	<u>(61)</u>	<u>(1,253)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,456</u>
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant	2,608	64,692	(62,318)	(2,780)	-	2,202
North Essex Teacher Training	253	290	(513)	-	-	30
Pupil premium	83	3,406	(3,454)	-	-	35
COVID Catch-up funding	137	-	(137)	-	-	-
Other ESFA Grants	-	4,371	(4,371)	-	-	-
Other restricted grants	-	2,613	(2,613)	-	-	-
National Tutoring programme	-	216	(216)	-	-	-

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21. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (Losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2023 £000
Other restricted activities	-	2,853	(2,853)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(8,470)	-	(4,164)	3,617	9,017	-
	<u>(5,389)</u>	<u>78,441</u>	<u>(80,639)</u>	<u>837</u>	<u>9,017</u>	<u>2,267</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Tangible fixed assets	126,396	18	(3,801)	4,589	-	127,202
LA capital grants	-	754	-	(754)	-	-
ESFA Capital grants	954	3,154	-	(3,194)	-	914
Capital funds	974	-	-	(225)	-	749
	<u>128,324</u>	<u>3,926</u>	<u>(3,801)</u>	<u>416</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>128,865</u>
Total Restricted funds	<u>122,935</u>	<u>82,367</u>	<u>(84,440)</u>	<u>1,253</u>	<u>9,017</u>	<u>131,132</u>
Total funds	<u>129,565</u>	<u>83,507</u>	<u>(84,501)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,017</u>	<u>137,588</u>

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

During the year £416,000 was transferred from restricted funds to restricted fixed asset funds regarding the revenue contribution to capital expenditure. £3,948,000 of LA and ESFA grant funding was used to fund fixed asset additions. Capital funds of £225,000 were used to fund capital expenditure at five of the Trust's schools.

A transfer of £1,253,000 was made from unrestricted reserves to restricted reserves to fund educational expenditure.

The Trust is designating funds over 10 year periods towards the future replacement of the Multi Use Games Areas - MUGA - at the Trust's schools. During the year, £216,000 was designated in respect of six schools, including £100,000 in respect of the Football Foundation contribution.

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

The General Annual Grant restricted fund includes all restricted GAG income and related expenditure and is used for the normal running of the academy.

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21. Statement of funds (continued)

Pupil Premium restricted fund represents funding received and related expenditure.

The Sigma Trust operates North Essex Teacher Training and the fund includes all grant and other income and related expenditure.

Other grants and activities represent funding received and related expenditure, all of which were fully expended during the year.

The pension reserve represents the deficit balance recognised on the LGPS pension scheme.

The restricted fixed asset fund represents the cost or valuation of fixed assets held by the Academy Trust and any unspent capital grant funding and the balance of proceeds of fixed asset disposals.

Unrestricted funds are those arising from unrestricted activities and can be applied for any purpose.

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the academy was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG it could carry forward at 31 August 2023.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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21. Statement of funds (continued)

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

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2021 £000</i>	<i>Income £000</i>	<i>Expenditure £000</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £000</i>	<i>Gains/ (Losses) £000</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2022 £000</i>
Unrestricted funds						
Designated funds						
MUGA replacement	144	-	-	40	-	184
Capital projects	-	-	-	975	-	975
	<u>144</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,015</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,159</u>
General funds						
General Funds - all funds	<u>5,876</u>	<u>879</u>	<u>(53)</u>	<u>(1,231)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,471</u>
Total Unrestricted funds	<u>6,020</u>	<u>879</u>	<u>(53)</u>	<u>(216)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,630</u>
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant	1,879	66,946	(63,551)	(2,671)	-	2,603
North Essex Teacher Training	305	383	(430)	-	-	258
Pupil premium	26	3,136	(3,079)	-	-	83
Paxman Academy funding	142	-	(142)	-	-	-
COVID Catch-up funding	411	493	(767)	-	-	137
Other ESFA Grants	-	33	(33)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(46,104)	-	(7,916)	3,066	42,484	(8,470)
	<u>(43,341)</u>	<u>70,991</u>	<u>(75,918)</u>	<u>395</u>	<u>42,484</u>	<u>(5,389)</u>

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21. Statement of funds (continued)

Tangible fixed assets	117,310	8,954	(3,491)	3,623	-	126,396
LA capital grants	-	1,234	-	(1,234)	-	-
ESFA Capital grants	601	2,634	-	(2,281)	-	954
Capital funds	-	-	1,261	(287)	-	974
	<u>117,911</u>	<u>12,822</u>	<u>(2,230)</u>	<u>(179)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>128,324</u>
Total Restricted funds	<u>74,570</u>	<u>83,813</u>	<u>(78,148)</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>42,484</u>	<u>122,935</u>
Total funds	<u>80,590</u>	<u>84,692</u>	<u>(78,201)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>42,484</u>	<u>129,565</u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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21. Statement of funds (continued)

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2023 were allocated as follows:

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Clacton County High School	1,524	<i>1,685</i>
Colne Community School & College	815	<i>1,010</i>
Harwich and Dovercourt High School	793	<i>457</i>
Monkwick Infants School	86	<i>345</i>
Monkwick Junior School	15	<i>163</i>
North Essex Teacher Training	31	<i>253</i>
Philip Morant School & College	1,537	<i>1,554</i>
St Helena School	520	<i>620</i>
The Sigma Trust Central Services	814	<i>647</i>
The Stanway School	872	<i>1,212</i>
Thomas Lord Audley School	545	<i>458</i>
Alton Park Junior School	309	<i>478</i>
Holland Park Primary School	397	<i>419</i>
Paxman Academy	465	<i>410</i>
Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve	8,723	<i>9,711</i>
Restricted fixed asset fund	128,865	<i>128,324</i>
Pension reserve	-	<i>(8,470)</i>
Total	137,588	<i>129,565</i>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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21. Statement of funds (continued)

Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching & educational support staff costs £000	Other support staff costs £000	Educational supplies £000	Other costs excluding depreciation £000	Total 2023 £000	Total 2022 £000
Clacton County High School	7,525	1,347	277	3,746	12,895	12,011
Colne Community School & College	4,815	1,558	189	1,700	8,262	8,008
Harwich and Dovercourt High School	4,961	1,421	255	1,384	8,021	7,967
Monkwick Infants School	796	283	17	400	1,496	1,676
Monkwick Junior School	996	320	73	288	1,677	1,564
North Essex Teacher Training	283	120	1	109	513	428
Philip Morant School & College	6,953	2,129	232	2,712	12,026	11,279
St Helena School	4,127	1,334	226	1,332	7,019	6,593
The Sigma Trust Central Services	718	2,190	12	535	3,455	3,473
The Stanway School	5,744	1,351	444	1,383	8,922	8,304
Thomas Lord Audley School	3,736	1,098	301	981	6,116	5,658
Alton Park Junior	1,873	555	62	442	2,932	3,056
Holland Park Primary School	1,464	470	64	361	2,359	2,283
Paxman Academy	2,923	991	183	910	5,007	3,671
Academy	46,914	15,167	2,336	16,283	80,700	75,971

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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22. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted funds 2023 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £000	Total funds 2023 £000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	127,203	127,203
Current assets	6,456	11,164	1,662	19,282
Creditors due within one year	-	(8,873)	-	(8,873)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	(24)	-	(24)
Total	6,456	2,267	128,865	137,588

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	<i>Unrestricted funds 2022 £000</i>	<i>Restricted funds 2022 £000</i>	<i>Restricted fixed asset funds 2022 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2022 £000</i>
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	126,396	126,396
Current assets	6,630	11,480	1,928	20,038
Creditors due within one year	-	(8,360)	-	(8,360)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	(39)	-	(39)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(8,470)	-	(8,470)
Total	6,630	(5,389)	128,324	129,565

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23. Reconciliation of net (expenditure)/income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Net (expenditure)/income for the year (as per Statement of financial activities)	(994)	<i>6,491</i>
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	3,799	<i>3,492</i>
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(3,908)	<i>(3,868)</i>
Interest receivable	(121)	<i>(9)</i>
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	262	<i>4,113</i>
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost	285	<i>737</i>
Decrease in stocks	2	<i>1</i>
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	902	<i>(867)</i>
Increase in creditors	498	<i>2,967</i>
Gain on disposal of fixed assets	3	<i>(1,261)</i>
Donated fixed assets	(18)	<i>(8,954)</i>
Net cash provided by operating activities	710	<i>2,842</i>

24. Cash flows from investing activities

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Interest receivable	121	<i>9</i>
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(4,728)	<i>(13,117)</i>
Proceeds from the sale of tangible fixed assets	-	<i>1,261</i>
Capital grants from DfE Group and LA	3,908	<i>3,868</i>
Donated tangible fixed asset	18	<i>8,954</i>
Asset under construction transferred to revenue expenditure	119	<i>539</i>
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities	(562)	<i>1,514</i>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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25. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Cash in hand and at bank	16,614	<i>16,466</i>
Total cash and cash equivalents	16,614	<i>16,466</i>

26. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 September 2022 £000	Cash flows £000	At 31 August 2023 £000
Cash at bank and in hand	16,466	148	16,614
Debt due within 1 year	(15)	-	(15)
	16,451	148	16,599

27. Capital commitments

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Contracted for but not provided in these financial statements		
Acquisition of tangible fixed assets	235	<i>641</i>

28. Pension commitments

The academy'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 Essex Pension Fund. Both are multi-employer defined benefit schemes.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2016 and of the LGPS 31 March 2022.

Contributions amounting to £1,204,985 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2023 (2022 - £1,066,607) and are included within creditors.

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28. Pension commitments (continued)

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. Membership is automatic for full-time teachers in academies. 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 specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors.

The 31 March 2016 TPS actuarial valuation results were implemented from 1 September 2019. The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation were:

- employer contribution rates set at 23.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administration levy)
- total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service to the effective date of £218,100 million and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £196,100 million, giving a notional past service deficit of £22,000 million
- the SCAPE rate, set by HMT, is used to determine the notional investment return. The current SCAPE rate is 2.4% above the rate of CPI, assumed real rate of return is 2.4% in excess of prices and 2% in excess of earnings. The rate of real earnings growth is assumed to be 2.2%. The assumed nominal rate of return including earnings growth is 4.45%.

The latest actuarial TPS valuation results, as at 31 March 2020, were released in October 2023. The revised employer contribution rate, arising from this valuation, is due to be implemented from 1 April 2024.

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £6,776,924 (2022 - £6,286,997).

A copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation is on the Teachers' Pensions website (<https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/news/employers/2019/04/teachers-pensions-valuation-report.aspx>).

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The academy has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The academy has set out above the information available on the scheme.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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28. Pension commitments (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2023 was £4,491,000 (2022 - £3,805,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £3,617,000 (2022 - £3,066,000) and employees' contributions totalled £874,000 (2022 - £739,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 25.0% per cent for employers and 5.5% - 12.5% per cent for employees.

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 of Education reaffirmed its commitment to the guarantee, with a parliamentary minute published on GOV.UK.

The Academy has a surplus of £436,000 arising on the FRS102 valuation of the LGPS. The Academy considers that an accounting surplus should only be recognised to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future, or through refunds. The present value of such economic benefits is commonly referred to as the "asset ceiling". Therefore the £436,000 asset has been derecognised in these accounts and instead represents an additional movement in other comprehensive income.

Principal actuarial assumptions

Essex Pension Fund

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	%	%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.90	3.95
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.90	2.95
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.30	4.25
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.90	2.95
Commutation of pensions to lump sums	50	50.00

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

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	Years	Years
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	20.7	21.0
Females	23.2	23.5
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	22.0	22.3
Females	24.6	24.9

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28. Pension commitments (continued)

Sensitivity analysis

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Discount rate +0.1%	(948)	<i>(1,341)</i>
Discount rate -0.1%	977	<i>1,374</i>
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	1,469	<i>1,773</i>
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	(1,428)	<i>(1,719)</i>
CPI rate +0.1%	56	<i>95</i>
CPI rate -0.1%	(56)	<i>(93)</i>

Share of scheme assets

The academy's share of the assets in the scheme was:

	At 31 August 2023	<i>At 31 August 2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Equities	30,526	<i>25,401</i>
Gilts	673	<i>869</i>
Corporate bonds	-	<i>1,998</i>
Property	4,110	<i>4,270</i>
Cash and other liquid assets	1,537	<i>1,351</i>
Alternative assets	8,308	<i>6,761</i>
Other managed funds	7,321	<i>4,489</i>
Total market value of assets	52,475	<i>45,139</i>

The actual return on scheme assets was £2,195,000 (2022 - £112,000).

The amounts recognised in the Statement of financial activities are as follows:

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	£000	<i>£000</i>
Current service cost	(3,854)	<i>(7,159)</i>
Interest income	1,991	<i>718</i>
Interest cost	(2,276)	<i>(1,455)</i>
Administrative expenses	(25)	<i>(20)</i>
Total amount recognised in the Statement of financial activities	(4,164)	<i>(7,916)</i>

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28. Pension commitments (continued)

Changes in the present value of the defined benefit obligations were as follows:

	2023 £000	2022 £000
At 1 September	53,609	88,263
Current service cost	3,854	7,159
Interest cost	2,276	1,455
Employee contributions	874	739
Actuarial gains	(7,586)	(43,092)
Benefits paid	(988)	(915)
At 31 August	52,039	53,609

Changes in the fair value of the academy's share of scheme assets were as follows:

	2023 £000	2022 £000
At 1 September	45,139	42,159
Interest income	1,991	718
Actuarial gains/(losses)	1,867	(608)
Employer contributions	3,617	3,066
Employee contributions	874	739
Benefits paid	(988)	(915)
Administrative expenses	(25)	(20)
At 31 August	52,475	45,139

29. Operating lease commitments

At 31 August 2023 the academy had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Not later than 1 year	242	227
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	241	222
Later than 5 years	62	-
	545	449

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30. Other financial commitments

Clacton County High School has a continuing PFI commitment relating to its school premises. The annual contribution for the current year was £1,969,831. (2022: £1,687,454).

The liability from school revenue towards this figure for the year ended 31 August 2023 will be £1,250,197. This commitment is expected to continue for the life of the PFI agreement which expires in 2035. The actual commitment is dependent on elements outside of the school's control and therefore cannot be accurately disclosed any further forward than one year.

Other key commitments, in relation to use of premises for Sigma Sixth, Clacton, total £986,850.

31. 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/she is a member, or within one year after he/she ceases to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10 for the debts and liabilities contracted before he/she ceases to be a member.

32. Related party transactions

Owing to the nature of the Trust and the composition of the Board of Trustees being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, transactions may take place with organisations in which the Trustees have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook, including notifying the ESFA of all transactions made on or after 1 April 2019 and obtaining their approval where required, and with the Trust's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures relating to connected and related party transactions.

B Markham, an SMT member, is a trustee of Westcliff Tendring Trust. Purchases from the Trust were £700 during the year, and no balance was outstanding at the year end.

During the year, F Pierson a partner of A Pierson was employed by the Trust as a headteacher and was paid within the normal pay scale for her role and receives no special treatment as a result of their relationship to an SMT member.

Mr S Ling a member of The Sigma Trust, is the father of an employee who is contracted as a teacher at the Philip Morant School and College. This employee has had continuous service at the school since the 1st September 2008 and has received no special treatment as a result of their relationship to a member.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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33. Agency arrangements

The academy distributes 16-19 bursary funds to students as an agent for ESFA. In the accounting year ending 31 August 2023 the Trust received funding of £80,808. £74,689 of funding was distributed. An amount of £12,987 (2022: £6,867) is included in accruals and deferred income relating to undistributed funds that are repayable to EFSA.

The academy is the lead school for North Essex Teacher Training, which distributes training bursaries on behalf of NCTL. During the accounting year ended 31 August 2023 bursary funding of £130,000 (2022: £113,200) was received and £130,000 (2022: £113,200) was distributed. The balance repayable at the year end is £nil (2022: £nil) and is included in other creditors.