

Company Registration No. 08010464 (England and Wales)

**THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST**  
**(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**  
**TRUSTEES' REPORT AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

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# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

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### Members

G A Wilson (Chair)  
L Tipping (Resigned 20 March 2024)  
M Woodhouse  
N Richards  
A Colley  
C Halford (Appointed 28 March 2024)

### Trustees

G A Wilson (Chair of The Rowan Learning Trust)  
A Foster (Resigned 28 March 2024)  
D Leonard  
A Ball  
M Chadwick  
A McGlown  
C Roberts  
P Rimmer (CEO & Accounting Officer)  
J Davies  
S Davis  
S Wilson (Appointed 12 June 2024)

### Senior management team

- Chief Executive Officer & Accounting Officer	P Rimmer
- Director of Standards	C Bolton
- Director of Operations	J Robinson
- Chief Financial Officer	G Goulding
- Director of Communication & Governance	E Roberts
- Director of Primary Education	S Beswick
- Director of Secondary Education	R Conefrey
- Director of People Relations	H Robinson

### Company secretary

E Roberts

### Company registration number

08010464 (England and Wales)

### Principal and registered office

18 Beecham Court  
Goose Green  
Wigan  
WN3 6PR

### Academies operated

Marus Bridge Primary School  
Three Towers Alternative Provision  
Plantation Primary School  
Kirkby High School  
Hawkey Hall High School  
The Heys School  
Farington Primary School  
Whitley Village School  
The Acorns Primary and Nursery School

### Location

Wigan  
Wigan  
Liverpool  
Knowsley  
Wigan  
Prestwich  
Leyland  
Warrington  
Ellesmere Port

### Principal

R Aldridge  
A Isherwood  
S Hanley  
A Dobson  
K Leonard  
P McKendrick  
A Williams  
H Broom  
H Broom

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

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**Independent auditor**

Cooper Parry Group Limited  
St James Building  
79 Oxford Street  
Manchester  
M1 6HT

**Bankers**

Lloyds Bank  
2-6 Market Street  
Wigan  
WN1 1JN

**Solicitors**

Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP  
One Wood Street  
London  
EC2V 7WS

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

### *FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024*

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The trustees present their annual report together with the accounts and auditor's report of the charitable company for the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024. The annual report serves the purposes of both a trustees' report, and a directors' report and strategic report under company law.

The trust operates three secondary academies, an alternative provision academy and five primary academies in the North West. Its academies have a combined pupil capacity of 4,986 and had a roll of 4,463 in the school census on May 2024

#### **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 Rowan Learning Trust Limited are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company operates as The Rowan Learning Trust.

Details of the trustees who served during 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.

##### Trustees' indemnities

The academy trust has purchased professional indemnity and directors' and officers' cover, provided by industry professionals on behalf of the DfE, via the Risk Protection Arrangement to protect the directors and officers from claims arising from negligence, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy trust business.

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

The Members of the academy trust are responsible for the appointment of trustees. The Members may appoint Trustees through such process as they may determine. Trustees are appointed to ensure that any gaps identified in the regular skills audit are filled. Full details are outlined in the Trust's Articles of Association (2021).

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

Trustees are appointed based on the skills that they will bring to the academy trust or based on a proposal to the academy trust by representative groups. On appointment, trustees will receive information relating to the academy trust and attend a briefing on the role and responsibilities of trustees.

Where necessary, training will be provided on charity, educational, financial and legal matters.

##### Organisational structure

The governance of the academy trust is defined in the memorandum and articles of association together with the funding agreement with the Department for Education.

The management structure consists of the board of trustees, cross trust executive team, heads of the academies, and their leadership teams.

The board of trustees is responsible for making decisions about the direction of the academy trust, senior staff appointments, setting general policy, approving annual plans and budgets, monitoring the academy trust through results and financial data.

The chief executive is the accounting officer of the academy trust. The executive headteacher, headteachers and head of schools manage the individual academies, implementing policies by the board of trustees and report to them on key data.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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The executive leadership team is responsible for supporting academies with leadership development, teaching and learning, safeguarding & SEN, information systems, estates management, finance, curriculum & assessment, human resources, marketing and data.

The day-to-day management of the academies is delegated to the headteachers and head of school, who have appointed a senior leadership team.

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

An executive pay structure was agreed by the board of trustees for the CEO, and other senior management personnel benchmarked, using the Cendex platform, against other MATs of a similar size, composition and location and in addition local Job Evaluation Schemes for non-teaching personnel. Academy Headteachers, Executive Headteachers and Senior Leadership Team's pay is set following STPCD guidance and formulae.

#### Trade Union Facility Time

The trade union facility time is bought back through the Local Authority for each school in the Trust.

#### *Relevant union officials*

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	5
Full-time equivalent employee number	-

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

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	1
1%-50%	4
51%-99%	-
100%	-

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

Total cost of facility time	846
Total pay bill	27,391,107
Percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time	-

#### *Paid trade union activities*

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

The academy trust works with professional associations and trade unions and engages in consultation, as required, to ensure that all aspects of the academy trust's performance affecting its employees, including financial and economic factors, are conveyed, discussed and consulted upon with them.

The academy trust's policy is to support recruitment and retention of pupils and employees with disabilities. The academy trust does this by adapting the physical environment, making support resources available and through training and career development. Ramps and disabled toilets are installed, and door widths are adequate to enable wheelchair access to the main areas of the academy trust's establishments.

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

Trustees have had regard to the need to foster the company's business relationship with suppliers, customers and others, by publishing Payment, Practice & Performance Data reports in September 2023 and March 2024, via Companies House, in respect of qualifying contracts during the period.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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

Owing to the nature of the academy 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. The trust has identified the following related party transactions which took place in the financial period and were declared:

The academy was related to Winstanley College, Wigan, by Mrs Louise Tipping who is a Member of the Rowan Learning Trust and Principal of Winstanley College. £17,060 (2023: £15,199) expenses were paid on account of the Rowan Learning Trust for the provision of student careers advisor service.

The academy was related to Makerfield Academy Trust, Wigan, by Mrs Louise Tipping who is a Member of the Rowan Learning Trust and a trustee of Makerfield Academy Trust. £nil (2023: £3,788) expenses were paid on account of the Rowan Learning Trust for the provision of initial teacher training on behalf of LFP (funds held at Hawkley Hall High School on behalf of the Learning Futures Partnership (LFP)).

The academy was related to Mosaic Academy Trust T/A Golborne Community Primary School, by Ms Anne Isherwood who is an employee of the Rowan Learning Trust and the Chair of Governors of Golborne Community Primary School. During the period, £250 (2023: £nil) income was received from Golborne Community Primary School for an observation/assessment visit.

The academy was related to Claire Hayes-Johnston, by Mrs Emily Hayes who is employed at Whitley Primary School. £nil (2023: £450) expenses were paid on account of the Rowan Learning Trust for the provision of after school cheer club at Whitley Primary School.

In entering into these transactions, the academy trust has complied with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023.

#### **Objectives and activities**

##### Objectives and aims

The academy trust's objective is to advance education for the public benefit. Our schools are working in collaboration, as one entity, to improve and maintain high educational standards across the group.

The trustees' vision is to make a positive difference to our communities by raising standards and aspirations. To ensure that students leave us with the skills, confidence and qualifications to succeed in the next stage of their lives. To support and develop our staff on their professional journey so they can meet their potential.

Students are offered supportive, positive and dynamic learning environments that enable them to focus on their studies and extra-curricular activities. As a result, students achieve academic and technological excellence and extend their sporting, artistic and musical accomplishments.

The academy trust fosters personal development that helps students to find meaning in their lives and respond with creativity and determination to the challenges that arise through the rapid pace of social change.

##### Objectives, strategies and activities

The Trust strategic aim is to provide a world class education which meets the needs of individual learners and prepares them for life beyond school by:

- Attracting, developing and retaining the best talent
- Embodying the RLT Values
- Optimising our resources
- Expanding our Reach

The main thrust of the school improvement work was maintaining and improving upon the standards of education provided across our schools.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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### Public benefit

The academy trust will promote, for the benefit of inhabitants of the academies' surrounding areas, the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

The academy trust's trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties.

## **Strategic report**

### **Achievements and performance**

#### Strategic reporting

The CEO and Executive Leadership Team provide comprehensive reports to the Trustees at board meetings. The reports include DfE (Department of Education), RSC (Regional Schools Commissioner) and Ofsted updates, evaluation of the strategic plan, staffing updates, schools updates and self-evaluation; Director of Secondary Education, Director of Primary Education and the Director of Standards provide updates on school performance, data and outcomes, improvement activity and current assessment of our schools; the Chief Financial Officer's reports update on all finance and audit matters; the Director of Operations reports on the risk register, estates, health and safety & compliance; The Director of People Relations reports on HR matters. This enables The Rowan Learning Trust's directors to have a broad understanding of current performance indicators and to ensure robust governance.

#### Operational planning

The Board of trustees receive reports from the CEO and other members of the executive team which detail progress against operational objectives and updates the board on outstanding matters and successes. The Board receives comprehensive due diligence reports on potential schools looking to join the Trust. These are then discussed in depth and the Board approves, or challenges, the Executive Leadership Team's recommendations. Educational considerations, financial details and estate review documentation is scrutinised to ensure effective risk management and growth strategy.

#### Staffing

From the onset, the board of trustees understood the need to establish a more sustainable staffing structure to manage the academy trust and increase our capacity to support schools effectively. In the executive team, we have in post a Chief Executive; Chief Financial Officer; Director of Operations; Director of Standards, Director of Human Resources; Director of Secondary Education; Director of Primary Education and a Director of Governance and communication. We have continued to add capacity and expertise to the central team and added a central finance service to the offer for our schools.

The CEO and the executive team continue to develop strategy to support the more effective delivery of services and centralised procurement. Evaluations of catering, IT, estates, and capital are well developed. There are well coordinated plans for buildings and ICT improvement across all the existing schools. The Trust received School Condition Allocation (SCA) and plans are in place to ensure that the impact of this funding is maximised.



# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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#### Key performance indicators

The Executive Leadership Team provide the Board of trustees with a comprehensive evaluation of each school's performance. The data includes external analysis (examinations and Ofsted) and internal monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance.

#### **Ofsted judgements**

Hawley Hall High School	- Inspection February 2019 – 'Good' judgement
Kirkby High School	- Inspection July 2022 – 'Good' judgement
Three Towers Alternative Provision	- Inspection February 2018 – 'Outstanding' judgement - Ungraded inspection November 2023
Marus Bridge Primary School	- Inspection September 2019 – 'Good' judgement
The Heys School	- Inspection June 2024 – 'Good' judgement
Farington primary School	- Inspection January 2024 – 'Good' judgement
The Acorns Primary & Nursery School	- No Ofsted inspection since this academy joined the trust.
Whitley Village School	- No Ofsted inspection since this academy joined the trust.
Plantation Primary School	- No Ofsted inspection since this academy joined the trust.

#### **Internal evaluation of performance**

Hawley Hall High School	- 'Good'
Kirkby High School	- 'Good'
Three Towers Alternative Provision	- 'Outstanding'
Marus Bridge Primary School	- 'Good'
The Heys School	- 'Good'
Farington Primary School	- 'Good'
The Acorns Primary & Nursery School	- 'Good'
Whitley Village School	- 'Good'
Plantation Primary School	- 'Good'

The Trust also monitors staffing costs as a percentage of general funds income and expenditure, pupil numbers & capital investment.

Prudent financial management has ensured the Trust remains in a strong financial position going forward.

#### Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the board of trustees has a reasonable expectation that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, 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 statement of accounting policies.

#### Promoting the success of the academy trust

The Rowan Learning Trust has a clear framework for determining the matters within its remit and has approved Terms of Reference for the matters delegated to its committees. Certain financial and strategic thresholds have been determined to identify matters requiring Board consideration and approval. The Scheme of delegation sets out the delegation and approval process across the organisation. When making decisions, each Trustee ensures that they act in a way they consider, in good faith, would most likely promote the Trust's success for the benefit of its stakeholders, and in doing so have regard (among other matters) to:

#### *The likely consequences of any decision in the long term*

The Trustees understand the education sector is evolving and the challenges of navigating through this transition. To help achieve the strategic aims of the Trust the Board refreshed our strategy to further focus on the growth of the organisation to ensure long term sustainability. However, while planning for the future, the Board also recognises that we must meet our mission and strategic aims for the existing schools in the Trust. The Trustees have taken the decisions they believe best support the five strategic aims.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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#### *The interests of the Trust's employees*

The Trustees recognise that our employees are fundamental and core to the delivery of our strategic aims. The success of our schools depends on attracting, retaining and motivating employees. From ensuring that we remain a responsible employer, from pay and benefits to our health, safety and workplace environment, the Trustees factor the implications of decisions on employees and the wider workforce, where relevant and feasible.

#### *The need to foster the Trust's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others*

Delivering our strategy requires strong mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers, the Department of Education, Regional Schools Commissioner, parents and community partners. The Trust seeks the promotion and application of certain general principles in such relationships. These are outlined in the Trust's values; respect, kindness and integrity. The ability to promote these principles, which are reviewed and approved by the Board periodically, is an important factor in the decision to enter or remain in such relationships.

#### *The impact of the Trust's operations on the community and the environment*

Schools are an integral part of the local community, and the trust is committed to reducing its environmental impact. Trustees receive information from individual schools which provide relevant information for specific Board decisions.

#### *The desirability of the Trust maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct*

The Board periodically reviews and approves policies, procedures and working practices to ensure that its high standards are maintained in the Trust. This, complemented by the ways the Board is informed and monitors compliance, help assure its decisions are taken and that Trust and the schools within the Trust act in ways that promote high standards of business conduct.

#### *The need to act fairly as between members of the Trust*

When making decisions the Trustees consider which course of action best enables delivery of our strategic aims in the long-term, taking into consideration the impact of the decision on all stakeholders. In doing so, our Trustees act fairly as between the Trust's members. Trustees are not required to balance the Trust's interest with those of individual stakeholders.

#### **Financial review**

The academy trust's financial result for the year to 31 August 2024 demonstrates total income of £39,823,000 with a deficit of £201,000, before actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes and revaluations of fixed assets.

The majority of the academy trust's income is obtained from the Education & 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 year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and the associated expenditure, which enabled the Trust to meet its key objectives, is shown as restricted funds in the statement of financial activities. The main area of expenditure continues to be staff related costs.

The academy trust also received grants for fixed assets from the ESFA and DfE which are shown in the statement of financial activities as restricted income in the fixed asset fund. The restricted fixed asset fund balance will be reduced by annual depreciation charges over the expected life of the assets concerned.

The reserves will be utilised for future capital projects, continuous improvements and for projects for the repair and replacement of educational equipment and materials. Reserves will also be allocated to the repair, replacement and updating of the academy trust's buildings, plant, equipment and contents. A proportion of the reserves have been allocated to the first-class education fund. The purpose of this is to fund projects that directly relate to the Trust achieving its stated aim of providing a first-class education. In addition to this, reserves will be used to cover the cost of the unfunded pay awards.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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The Trustees ensure that investment risk is properly managed and that value for money is achieved, complying with its Funding Agreement, Articles of Association and the Academy Trust Handbook. The Trustees regularly review investments and the investment policy.

The Trustees continue to monitor the impact of the material pension liability and seek professional advice as appropriate throughout the year.

#### Reserves policy

The trustees review the reserve levels of the academy trust annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure stream, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. The policy of the trust is to carry forward a prudent level of resources to provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipt of grants and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies such as urgent maintenance. The academy trust's current level of free reserves (total funds less the amount held in fixed assets restricted fund and excluding pension reserve) is £1,631,000 restricted funds and £2,665,000 unrestricted funds totalling £4,296,000. Restricted funds are to be used to make significant financial impact in continuing to provide associated services/support in the delivery of education to our students and if required, will be utilised for continuous improvements and for projects for the repair and replacement of educational equipment and materials. At 31 August 2024 the Trust had designated reserves for school improvement, school's sports partnership and building projects.

#### Investment policy

The Board will act within its powers to invest, seek advice from a professional advisor as appropriate and ensure that investment decisions are in the best interest of the Trust. The Trustees will exercise caution in all investments and ensure exposure to investment products is tightly controlled.

Management of cash flow should ensure that there are always sufficient funds in the main bank accounts to cover operational costs. Trustees are committed to ensuring that all funds are managed in such a way as to maximise return whilst minimising risk, seeking to ensure that any cash not required for operating expenses is placed on deposit at the most favourable rate. The approval of the accounting officer is required before any investment is made and a report is presented to the audit committee.

#### Principal risks and uncertainties

The academy trust has developed risk management procedures as outlined above. The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the academies are exposed, and a formal review of the academy trust's risk management process is undertaken on an annual basis.

Our six risk pillars are:

- High Quality of Education: Attendance, suspensions, exclusions, staffing stability and recruitment
- Governance: Attendance, recruitment and succession planning
- People: Complaints, disciplinaries, wellbeing & absence
- Estates: H&S, energy, and maintenance
- Finance: MMA / budgets, reserves, cash flow and assets and liabilities
- Information: Cyber security, AI & Data protection

Key controls and actions that are in place to manage our risk are identified in the Trust risk register. This is reviewed termly with the Director of Compliance, CEO and the risk owner. Following this it is reviewed by the risk and audit committee.

The academy trust has recognised its share of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) assets and liabilities in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102. A deficit has been recognised at 31 August 2024. Trustees are assessing the impact of the pension deficit and its likely call on funds at present and in the future.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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### Fundraising

Fundraising conforms to recognised standards. Schools within the Trust do not engage the services of professional fundraisers, nor use intrusive or persistent fund-raising approaches and are clear that stakeholders/members of the public are under no obligation to donate. Fundraising to generate funds for specific school events such as the Y11 leavers' Prom, is managed and monitored by designated staff. Internal communications provide detailed information in respect of how voluntary contributions can be made and how the funds raised will benefit the school. All contributions are recorded in the finance system and banked in-tact.

Funds raised in schools, through various student activities and voluntary contributions, for external charities are recorded in the finance system and banked and payments remitted by cheque or bacs.

Guidance is available to Trustees via Charity Commission's publication Charity fundraising: a guide to Trustee duties.

### Streamlined energy and carbon reporting

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>kWh</b>	<b>kWh</b>
Aggregate of energy consumption in the year	5,993,157	6,021,168

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>metric tonnes</b>	<b>metric tonnes</b>
<i>Emissions of CO2 equivalent</i>		
Scope 1 - direct emissions		
- Gas combustion	675.19	651.22
- Fuel consumed for owned transport	6.06	6.26
- Oil for heating	44.34	26.43
	725.59	683.91
Scope 2 - indirect emissions		
- Electricity purchased	534.02	490.78
Scope 3 - other indirect emissions		
- Fuel consumed for transport not owned by the academy trust	8.34	12.01
	1,267.95	1,186.70
Total gross emissions	1,267.95	1,186.70
<i>Intensity ratio</i>		
Tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.28	0.28

### 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 2024 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting for current period data.

### 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

Continued rolling programme of LED lighting installation. Replacement of underground pipework with thermally efficient alternative. Replacement of sports hall gas heating system with more efficient units.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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### **Plans for future periods**

The Trust's focus for the 2024-25 academic year is further consolidation of improvements made in previous years and ensuring that we achieve our strategic aim of providing a world class education. There will be a continued focus on ensuring that our schools continue to improve in all areas. The Trust will continue to explore opportunities to maximise resources and expand our reach.

Improvements to the Trusts' governance structures and schemes of delegation which better reflect the contexts of each school have been implemented. The Trust will continue to develop its executive team and central team to ensure that it has the capacity and expertise to support our current and any additional schools. These developments will be undertaken by the CEO and key Trust personnel, liaising with the Board of Trustees. In addition to the central team the Trust now draws from expertise from all of our academies to conduct school to school support within and outside of the academy trust. We have also recruited several key external consultants to provide additional support to our schools.

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

The Rowan Learning Trust held funds at Hawley Hall High School as a member of the Learning Futures Partnership (LFP). This demonstrates capacity in our central financial services to support other establishments and is a legacy from previous school to school support. This generates reputational capital for the Trust as well as Hawley Hall and demonstrates the high calibre of staff within the Trust.

### **Auditor**

In so far as the trustees are aware:

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

The audit business of UHY Hacker Young Manchester LLP was acquired by Cooper Parry Group Limited on 30 September 2024. UHY Hacker Young Manchester LLP has resigned as auditor and Cooper Parry Group Limited has been appointed in its place. The auditor, Cooper Parry Group Limited, is deemed to be reappointed under section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 06 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

*G A Wilson*

G A Wilson

**Chair of The Rowan Learning Trust**

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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### Scope of responsibility

As trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that The Rowan Learning 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 DfE's Governance Handbook and competency framework for governance.

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 Rowan Learning 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 met four times during the period. Attendance during the year at meetings of the board of trustees was as follows:

Trustees	Meetings attended	Out of possible
G A Wilson (Chair of The Rowan Learning Trust)	4	4
A Foster (Resigned 28 March 2024)	1	3
D Leonard	3	4
A Ball	4	4
M Chadwick	4	4
A McGlown	4	4
C Roberts	4	4
P Rimmer (CEO & Accounting Officer)	4	4
J Davies	3	4
S Davis	4	4
S Wilson (Appointed 12 June 2024)	1	1

The board reviews performance of each school at key points in the academic year. They consider progress data, attendance, exclusions, safeguarding/racial incident matters as well as staffing changes. The board also reviews LGC and LAB membership.

The Trust maintains an up-to-date record of pecuniary interests, and this is monitored by the Director of Governance and Communication and referred to in determining any potential related party transactions.

### Conflicts of interest

The trust maintains an up-to-date and complete register of interests. Conflict of interests is a standing item on all full board meeting and committee meeting agendas in order to give trustees the opportunity to declare any interests in general, and specifically in relation to the agenda itself. This is formally minuted. Should any interests be declared, the relevant trustee would abstain from any discussion or decision making for that agenda item.

The Director of Governance and Compliance informs the Chief Financial Officer immediately of any interests declared. The Chief Financial Officer regularly provides a full list of suppliers and contractors to the full board and formally requires trustees to make any interests known at that point. This is formally minuted.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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### Governance reviews

Self-assessment of governance forms an integral part of the trust's school improvement cycle. In the summer term of 2024, we self-assessed against section C of the Multi Academy Trust Leadership Development: Chief Executive Officer content framework. This self-evaluation will take place annually in the spring term.

The development opportunities that have been identified as a result of our self-assessments are incorporated in the Trust Development Plan for the 2024-25 academic year. An external review of governance is also planned once the next cycle of self-evaluation has taken place, in summer and autumn of 2024. The findings of this will be incorporated in the Trust's development planning for 2025-26.

The **Finance committee** is a sub-committee of the main board of trustees. Its purpose is to:

- review each academy's internal and external financial statements and reports to ensure that they reflect best practice and value for money;
- discuss with the external auditor the nature and scope of each forthcoming audit and the findings of the audit once completed;
- consider any other matters where requested to do so by the board; and report at least once a year to the board on the discharge of the above duties.

Attendance at finance committee meetings in the year was as follows:

<b>Trustees</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of possible</b>
G A Wilson (Chair of The Rowan Learning Trust)	3	3
A Foster (Resigned 28 March 2024)	0	2
D Leonard	3	3
A Ball	2	3
C Roberts	3	3
P Rimmer (CEO & Accounting Officer)	3	3
S Davis	2	2
S Wilson (Appointed 12 June 2024)	1	1

The **Audit & risk committee** is a sub-committee of the main board of trustees. Its purpose is to:

- discuss with the external auditor the nature and scope of each forthcoming audit and the findings of the audit once completed;
- consider all relevant reports from any internal audit or the appointed external auditor, including reports on each academy's accounts, achievement of value for money and the response to any management letters;
- monitor the implementation of action to address adverse control findings by any internal audit or the appointed external auditor;
- review the effectiveness of each academy's internal control system established to ensure that the aims, objectives and key performance targets of the organisation are achieved in the most economic, effective and environmentally preferable manner;
- consider and advise the board on each academy's annual and long-term audit programme, ensuring that each academy's internal controls are subject to appropriate independent scrutiny at least in accordance with Government standards;
- focus on providing assurances to the board of trustees that all risks are being adequately identified and managed with particular regard to reviewing the risks to internal financial control at the trust, agreeing a programme of work to address, and provide assurance on, those risks; and
- consider any other matters where requested to do so by the board; and report at least once a year to the board on the discharge of the above duties.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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Attendance at audit and risk committee meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustees	Meetings attended	Out of possible
G A Wilson (Chair of The Rowan Learning Trust)	3	3
A Foster (Resigned 28 March 2024)	1	2
M Chadwick	2	3
C Roberts	3	3
P Rimmer (CEO & Accounting Officer)	3	3
S Davis	3	3

#### Review of value for money

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

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

- improving educational outcomes through the continued development of a high calibre of teaching and support staff across the academy trust;
- further increasing a centralised approach to purchasing which has delivered economies of scale in information technology equipment, licences and support, external human resources/employment law support and guidance, asset management package, behaviour management software, recruitment advertising, telephones, print solutions, bulk paper;
- governors and academy managers utilised the hire of school facilities, to the benefit of the local community, to generate income;
- continued review of the operations and strategies as the academy trust develops will lead to continuous improvement in the individual academies' achievements and services;
- Ensuring the SCA & DFC Funding has been utilised effectively in maintaining the condition of the estate, prioritising matters that would impact health & safety and safeguarding. Continued programme of maintenance and servicing under contracts with external specialists, ensuring we engage appropriate third parties to fulfil our health & safety obligations.

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

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of academy trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in The Rowan Learning Trust for the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

#### Capacity to handle risk

The board of trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the academy trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The board of trustees is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 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 ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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

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

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the board of trustees;
- regular review by the finance, audit & risk 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 (assets purchase or capital investment) guidelines;
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties; and
- identification and management of risks.

The board of trustees has decided to buy-in an internal audit service from Mitchell Charlesworth to carry out a programme of internal checks and assurance. The role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the academy trust's financial systems. In particular, the checks carried out in the current period, included testing of:

- Income
- Expenditure
- Debtors
- Creditors
- Bank & cash
- Accrued & deferred Income
- Accrued expenditure & prepayments

On a termly basis, the Internal auditor reports to the board of trustees, through the finance committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the board of trustees' financial responsibilities and prepares an annual summary report to the committee outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations, and conclusions to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress.

The internal auditor delivered their schedule of work as planned for the year. No significant control issues were identified as a result of the internal auditor's work.

### **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:

- the work of the internal auditor;
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process or the school resource management self-assessment tool;
- the work of the executive managers within the academy trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework; and
- the work of the external auditor; and
- the work of the audit & risk committee.

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 & risk committee, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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### **Conclusion**

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

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 06 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

*G A Wilson*

*Phil Rimmer*

G A Wilson  
**Chair of The Rowan Learning Trust**

P Rimmer  
**CEO & Accounting Officer**

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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As accounting officer of The Rowan Learning Trust, I have considered my responsibility to notify the academy trust board of trustees and the Education and 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 trust 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 2023, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

I confirm that I and the academy trust's board of trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the academy trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the academy trust's funding agreement and the Academy Trust Handbook 2023.

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.

*Phil Rimmer*

P Rimmer  
**Accounting Officer**

06 December 2024

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

### *FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024*

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The trustees (who are also the directors of The Rowan Learning Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the accounts in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 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 accounts for each financial year. Under company law, the trustees must not approve the accounts 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 accounts, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare 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 accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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

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

Approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on 06 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

*G.A Wilson*

G A Wilson  
**Chair of The Rowan Learning Trust**

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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### Opinion

We have audited the accounts of The Rowan Learning Trust for the year ended 31 August 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the accounts, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In our opinion the accounts:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 August 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024.

### Basis for opinion

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

### Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

### Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the accounts and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the accounts 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 accounts 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 accounts 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.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts 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 accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the accounts, the trustees are responsible for assessing the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts**

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

As a result of these procedures, we considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

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

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 ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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### **Identifying and assessing potential risks related to irregularities**

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud, we considered the following:

- The nature of the industry and sector, control environment and business performance.
- Any matters we identified having obtained and reviewed the company's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to:
- Identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
- Detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- The internal controls established to mitigate risks of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations; and
- The matters discussed among the audit engagement team and involving relevant internal specialists, including tax, and industry specialists regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, we considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas: recognition of income and misappropriation of funds. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

We also obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks the academy operates in, focussing on provisions of those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The key laws and regulations we considered in this context included the UK Companies Act and Academies Accounts Direction.

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

Our procedures to respond to risks identified included the following:

- Reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- Enquiring of management and those charged with governance concerning actual and potential litigation claims;
- In addressing the risk of fraud through inappropriate recording of income, we review the existence and completeness of ESFA income and reconcile all other material income streams to third party evidence;
- We carry out a detailed review of deferred income, including a review of amounts released to income in the year;
- We review a sample of expenditure to ensure it has been appropriately authorised and that tender process have been followed where applicable;
- We carry out a review of the register of interests and minutes to ensure that all related parties have been disclosed adequately;
- In assessing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and assessing whether judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of potential bias.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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

### **Use of our report**

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

*S Grayson*

**Stephen Grayson ACA FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
for and on behalf of Cooper Parry Group Limited**

06/12/2024  
.....

**Statutory Auditor**

St James Building  
79 Oxford Street  
Manchester  
M1 6HT



# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

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

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024***

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In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 25 November 2024 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by The Rowan Learning Trust during the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 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 Rowan Learning Trust and ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to The Rowan Learning 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 Rowan Learning Trust and ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

### **Respective responsibilities of The Rowan Learning Trust's accounting officer and the reporting accountant**

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of The Rowan Learning Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education and the Academies Financial Handbook, extant from 1 September 2023, 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 2023 to 2024. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

### **Approach**

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountant of Academy Trusts issued by 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 trust's income and expenditure.

In line with the Framework and guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Academy Trusts issued April 2023, we have not performed any additional procedures regarding the academy trust's compliance with safeguarding, health and safety and estates management.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

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

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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### **Conclusion**

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

*L Grayson*

### **Reporting Accountant**

Cooper Parry Group Limited  
St James Building  
79 Oxford Street  
Manchester  
M1 6HT

Dated: 06/12/2024.....

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds: General £'000	Fixed asset £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>						
Donations and capital grants	3	-	24	1,085	1,109	1,202
Donations - transfer from local authority on conversion		-	-	-	-	6,216
Charitable activities:						
- Funding for educational operations	4	-	37,379	-	37,379	32,608
Other trading activities	5	843	491	-	1,334	1,322
Investments	6	1	-	-	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<u>844</u>	<u>37,894</u>	<u>1,085</u>	<u>39,823</u>	<u>41,349</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>						
Charitable activities:						
- Educational operations	9	929	37,762	1,333	40,024	36,500
<b>Total</b>	7	<u>929</u>	<u>37,762</u>	<u>1,333</u>	<u>40,024</u>	<u>36,500</u>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		(85)	132	(248)	(201)	4,849
Transfers between funds	20	-	113	(113)	-	-
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses)</b>						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	22	-	687	-	687	3,706
Adjustment for restriction on pension assets	22	-	(204)	-	(204)	(2,536)
Revaluation of fixed assets	13	-	-	(3,610)	(3,610)	829
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<u>(85)</u>	<u>728</u>	<u>(3,971)</u>	<u>(3,328)</u>	<u>6,848</u>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward		<u>2,750</u>	<u>377</u>	<u>37,613</u>	<u>40,740</u>	<u>33,892</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u>2,665</u>	<u>1,105</u>	<u>33,642</u>	<u>37,412</u>	<u>40,740</u>

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Comparative year information Year ended 31 August 2023	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted funds:		Total
		funds £'000	General £'000	Fixed asset £'000	2023 £'000
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
Donations and capital grants	3	-	9	1,193	1,202
Donations - transfer from local authority on conversion		-	748	5,468	6,216
Charitable activities:					
- Funding for educational operations	4	-	32,608	-	32,608
Other trading activities	5	695	627	-	1,322
Investments	6	1	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>		696	33,992	6,661	41,349
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable activities:					
- Educational operations	9	537	34,611	1,352	36,500
<b>Total</b>	7	537	34,611	1,352	36,500
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		159	(619)	5,309	4,849
Transfers between funds	20	(531)	531	-	-
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses)</b>					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	22	-	3,706	-	3,706
Adjustment for restriction on pension assets	22	-	(2,536)	-	(2,536)
Revaluation of fixed assets	13	-	-	829	829
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		(372)	1,082	6,138	6,848
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		3,122	(705)	31,475	33,892
Total funds carried forward		2,750	377	37,613	40,740

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024

		2024		2023	
	Notes	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	13		33,723		37,762
<b>Current assets</b>					
Stock	14	1		1	
Debtors	15	1,161		1,303	
Cash at bank and in hand		7,409		6,963	
		<u>8,571</u>		<u>8,267</u>	
<b>Current liabilities</b>					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(4,347)		(3,598)	
<b>Net current assets</b>			4,224		4,669
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			37,947		42,431
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	17		(9)		(20)
Provisions for liabilities	18		-		(249)
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>			37,938		42,162
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	22		(526)		(1,422)
<b>Total net assets</b>			<u>37,412</u>		<u>40,740</u>
<b>Funds of the academy trust:</b>					
<b>Restricted funds</b>	20				
- Fixed asset funds			33,642		37,613
- Restricted income funds			1,631		1,799
- Pension reserve			(526)		(1,422)
<b>Total restricted funds</b>			<u>34,747</u>		<u>37,990</u>
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>	20		2,665		2,750
<b>Total funds</b>			<u>37,412</u>		<u>40,740</u>

The accounts on pages 25 to 51 were approved by the trustees and authorised for issue on 06 December 2024 and are signed on their behalf by:

*GA Wilson*

G A Wilson

Chair of The Rowan Learning Trust

Company registration number 08010464 (England and Wales)

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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		2024		2023	
	Notes	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	23		280		(924)
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>					
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		1		1	
Capital grants from DfE Group		1,085		1,193	
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(902)		(1,141)	
Proceeds from sale of tangible fixed assets		(2)		-	
		<u>          </u>		<u>          </u>	
<b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>			182		53
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>					
Repayment of borrowing		(16)		(13)	
		<u>          </u>		<u>          </u>	
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>			(16)		(13)
			<u>          </u>		<u>          </u>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period</b>			446		(884)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year			6,963		7,847
			<u>          </u>		<u>          </u>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year</b>			7,409		6,963
			<u>          </u>		<u>          </u>

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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#### 1 Accounting policies

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

##### 1.1 Basis of preparation

The accounts of the academy trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of land and buildings, 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 2023 to 2024 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

##### 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 charitable company to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of at least one year from the date of authorisation for issue of the accounts and have concluded that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern. Thus they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the accounts.

##### 1.3 Income

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

###### Grants

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

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

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

###### Sponsorship income

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

###### Donations

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

###### Other income

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

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

---

#### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

##### Donated goods, facilities and services

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

##### Donated fixed assets

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

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

##### Expenditure on raising funds

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

##### Charitable activities

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

#### 1.5 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

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

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



# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

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

Land and buildings	50 years or over the term of the PFI (excluding land)
Computer equipment	3 years straight line
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	7 years straight line
Motor vehicles	5 years 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.

#### 1.6 Liabilities

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

#### 1.7 Provisions

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

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

#### 1.8 Leased assets

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

#### 1.9 Financial instruments

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

##### Financial assets

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

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

##### Financial liabilities

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

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

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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#### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

##### 1.10 Stock

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Net realisable value is based on estimated selling price less further costs to completion and disposal. Provision is made for obsolete and slow moving stock.

##### 1.11 Taxation

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

##### 1.12 Pensions benefits

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

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

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

##### 1.13 Fund accounting

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

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

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.

##### 1.14 PFI Charge

Some of the academy buildings were built under a PFI agreement, as at 31 August 2024 the agreement had a further 9 years to run. The local authority will continue to pay the unitary charge to the PFI provider under the pre-existing PFI contract. In turn, the academy trust will continue to pay the local authority.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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

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

##### Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

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

##### **Local Government Pension Scheme Liability:**

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit 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 22, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2023 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2024. 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 liability.

The ultimate responsibility for setting the assumptions is that of the Academy Trust, as the employer, however each year the LGPS actuary proposes a standard set of assumptions as part of the valuation exercise, using their expert opinion, and which comply with the accounting requirements. The Academy Trust has, in practice with most employers, adopted the recommended actuarial assumptions following further consultation with its auditors to ensure these assumptions are reasonable and in line with those adopted by other academy trusts.

The key assumption is the discount rate, which is the estimated rate of long-term investment returns. This year the discount rate of 5% is slightly lower than the rate of 5.2-5.3% used in 2023. Since the discount rate remains high, assets will grow more rapidly in the future, this results in lower current liabilities. This, along with pension assets transferred in from new schools, is the key driver for the increase in the net surplus before restriction from £1,114k to £2,214k during the year.

As the trust cannot draw down on surplus funds and does not "control" the asset, the actuarial gain in OCI has been restricted in order to recognise a £526k deficit where such schemes are showing a surplus.

#### 3 Donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Capital grants	-	1,085	1,085	1,193
Other donations	-	24	24	9
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	-	1,109	1,109	1,202
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

### 4 Funding for the academy trust's educational operations

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
<b>DfE/ESFA grants</b>				
General annual grant (GAG)	-	28,913	28,913	25,882
Other DfE/ESFA grants:				
- UIFSM	-	176	176	125
- Pupil premium	-	1,919	1,919	1,600
- Start up grants	-	7	7	44
- Others	-	2,393	2,393	1,596
	-	33,408	33,408	29,247
<b>Other government grants</b>				
Local authority grants	-	3,971	3,971	2,962
<b>COVID-19 additional funding</b>				
<b>DfE/ESFA</b>				
Other DfE/ESFA COVID-19 funding	-	-	-	399
<b>Total funding</b>	-	37,379	37,379	32,608

### 5 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Hire of facilities	117	17	134	106
Catering income	203	-	203	203
Other income	523	474	997	1,013
	843	491	1,334	1,322

### 6 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Short term deposits	1	-	1	1

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

### 7 Expenditure

	Staff costs £'000	Non-pay expenditure		Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
		Premises £'000	Other £'000		
Academy's educational operations					
- Direct costs	24,390	-	3,121	27,511	23,795
- Allocated support costs	5,543	3,671	3,299	12,513	12,705
	<u>29,933</u>	<u>3,671</u>	<u>6,420</u>	<u>40,024</u>	<u>36,500</u>

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Operating lease rentals	167	95
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	1,331	1,352
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	2	-
Fees payable to auditor for:		
- Audit	32	32
- Other services	7	7
Net interest on defined benefit pension liability	(77)	119

### 8 Central services

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

- human resources;
- financial services;
- legal services;
- educational support services;
- maintenance and support services

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

- flat percentage of GAG income (less PFI charges where applicable) - 5%
- time-apportioned (based on days spent working at each school)
- invoices as actual costs applicable to each entity
- additional TCA fund remitted to pay for infrastructure work

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

#### 8 Central services

(Continued)

The amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Marus Bridge Primary School	110	106
Three Towers Alternative Provision	176	168
Plantation Primary School	121	27
Kirkby High School	484	445
Hawkley Hall High School	425	393
The Heys School	304	229
Farington Primary School	59	54
Whitley Village School	28	24
The Acorns Primary and Nursery School	96	93
	<u>1,803</u>	<u>1,539</u>

#### 9 Charitable activities

	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>funds</b>	<b>funds</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Direct costs</b>				
Educational operations	-	27,511	27,511	23,795
<b>Support costs</b>				
Educational operations	929	11,584	12,513	12,705
	<u>929</u>	<u>39,095</u>	<u>40,024</u>	<u>36,500</u>

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Analysis of support costs</b>		
Support staff costs	5,640	5,248
Depreciation	1,333	1,352
Technology costs	398	318
Premises costs	2,338	2,972
Legal costs	80	62
Other support costs	2,685	2,714
Governance costs	39	39
	<u>12,513</u>	<u>12,705</u>

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

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

### 10 Staff

#### Staff costs and employee benefits

Staff costs during the year were:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Wages and salaries	21,520	19,322
Social security costs	2,227	1,819
Pension costs	4,663	4,362
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Staff costs - employees	28,410	25,503
Agency staff costs	1,511	730
Staff restructuring costs	12	80
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	29,933	26,313
Staff development and other staff costs	277	267
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total staff expenditure	30,210	26,580
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Staff restructuring costs comprise:		
Redundancy payments	12	80
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

#### Staff numbers

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

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number</b>
Teachers	252	270
Administration and support	369	378
Management	46	46
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	667	694
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

#### 10 Staff

(Continued)

##### Higher paid staff

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

	2024 Number	2023 Number
£60,001 - £70,000	31	12
£70,001 - £80,000	12	5
£80,001 - £90,000	2	5
£90,001 - £100,000	6	3
£110,001 - £120,000	1	1
£120,001 - £130,000	2	-
£140,001 - £150,000	-	1
£150,001 - £160,000	1	-

##### Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the academy trust comprise the trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the academy trust was £1,149,000 (2023: £938,000).

#### 11 Trustees' remuneration and expenses

One or more of the trustees has been paid remuneration or has received other benefits from an employment with the academy trust. 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, and not in respect of their services as trustees.

The value of trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

P Rimmer (CEO/ Accounting Officer)

Remuneration £150,000 - £160,000 (2023: £140,000 - £150,000)

Employer's pension contributions £40,000 - £45,000 (2023: £30,000 - £35,000)

During the period ended 31 August 2024, insurance, travel and subsistence expenses totalling £523 were reimbursed or paid directly to trustees (2023: £246).

#### 12 Trustees' and officers' insurance

The academy trust has opted into the Department for 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 trust 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.



# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

### 13 Tangible fixed assets

	Land and buildings	Computer equipment	Fixtures, fittings & equipment	Motor vehicles	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Cost</b>					
At 1 September 2023	39,519	2,206	3,526	135	45,386
Additions	187	322	349	44	902
Revaluation	(3,610)	-	-	-	(3,610)
Disposals	-	-	-	(2)	(2)
At 31 August 2024	36,096	2,528	3,875	177	42,676
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 September 2023	3,614	1,762	2,136	112	7,624
On disposals	-	-	-	(1)	(1)
Charge for the year	684	328	311	7	1,330
At 31 August 2024	4,298	2,090	2,447	118	8,953
<b>Net book value</b>					
At 31 August 2024	31,798	438	1,428	59	33,723
At 31 August 2023	35,905	444	1,390	23	37,762

The academy trust's transactions relating to land and buildings included:

- Canopy works for the new "H Block" building at Hawkley Hall High School at a cost of £54k.
- Ball hall works at Kirkby High School at a cost of £35k.
- £23k lighting, £29k flooring and £44k outdoor canopies at other schools.

The land and buildings at Plantation Primary School were revalued by Montagu Evans on 1 September 2023 at £1,845k, resulting in a downward revaluation of £3,610k included within OCI.

### 14 Stock

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Catering stock	1	1

### 15 Debtors

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Trade debtors	18	69
VAT recoverable	116	137
Other debtors	12	-
Prepayments and accrued income	1,015	1,097
	1,161	1,303

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Government loans	11	16
Trade creditors	545	264
Other creditors	1,240	1,105
Accruals and deferred income	2,551	2,213
	<u>4,347</u>	<u>3,598</u>

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

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Government loans	9	20
	<u>9</u>	<u>20</u>
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Analysis of loans</b>		
Wholly repayable within five years	20	36
Less: included in current liabilities	(11)	(16)
	<u>9</u>	<u>20</u>
Amounts included above	<u>9</u>	<u>20</u>
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Loan maturity</b>		
Debt due in one year or less	11	16
Due in more than one year but not more than two years	4	10
Due in more than two years but not more than five years	5	8
Due in more than five years	-	2
	<u>20</u>	<u>36</u>

At 31 August 2024 there is a total of 5 interest free Government Salix loans outstanding totalling £20,346 (2023: £35,728) with amounts due after one year of £9,409 (2023: £19,596).

The amounts consist of:

Hawkley Hall High School - £2,652 with 1 repayment outstanding.

Three Towers Alternative Provision Academy - £2,543 with 1 repayment outstanding. There is a further loan of £6,841 outstanding with a total of 10 repayments outstanding of biannual instalments of £684. Of these repayments, 8 are due after one year.

Marus Bridge Primary School - £5,310 with a total of 5 repayments which are repayable in biannual instalments of £1,062. Of these repayments, 3 are due after one year.

Whitley Village School - £3,000 with a total of 4 repayments which are repayable biannual instalments of £750. Of these repayments 2 are due after one year.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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#### 18 Provisions for liabilities

In the prior year, a provision of £249k had been recognised with regards to the back dated holiday pay of term time staff members.

This provision was based on an ongoing court case, whereby the trade union, Unison, had identified a problem with how Wigan Council calculated the holiday pay entitlement for term time workers. Member schools of The Rowan Learning Trust had been using the same methods of calculation and continued to use this method following the conversion to an academy. Unison has secured two legal victories for similar cases with different Council borough's and so there is a probable outcome that this case will result in the outflow of economic benefits.

This matter was settled during the year and the provision has been released in full.

#### 19 Deferred income

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Deferred income is included within:		
Creditors due within one year	909	923
	=====	=====
Deferred income at 1 September 2023	923	1,058
Released from previous years	(923)	(1,058)
Resources deferred in the year	909	923
	-----	-----
Deferred income at 31 August 2024	909	923
	=====	=====

At the balance sheet date the trust was holding the following funds which had been received in relation to:

- Capital funds - £105k
- SEN top up - £146k
- UIFSM relief - £78k
- School trips - £83k
- NTP clawback - £68k
- PP clawback - £13k
- Sundry/other - £416k

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

### 20 Funds

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2024 £'000
<b>Restricted general funds</b>					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,799	28,913	(29,194)	113	1,631
Start up grants	-	7	(7)	-	-
UIFSM	-	176	(176)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	1,919	(1,919)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	2,393	(2,393)	-	-
Other government grants	-	3,971	(3,971)	-	-
Other restricted funds	-	515	(515)	-	-
Pension reserve	(1,422)	-	413	483	(526)
	<u>377</u>	<u>37,894</u>	<u>(37,762)</u>	<u>596</u>	<u>1,105</u>
<b>Restricted fixed asset funds</b>					
Inherited on conversion	25,020	-	-	-	25,020
DfE group capital grants	12,480	1,085	(1,333)	(3,723)	8,509
Private sector capital sponsorship	113	-	-	-	113
	<u>37,613</u>	<u>1,085</u>	<u>(1,333)</u>	<u>(3,723)</u>	<u>33,642</u>
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>37,990</u>	<u>38,979</u>	<u>(39,095)</u>	<u>(3,127)</u>	<u>34,747</u>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General funds	2,750	844	(929)	-	2,665
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>40,740</u>	<u>39,823</u>	<u>(40,024)</u>	<u>(3,127)</u>	<u>37,412</u>

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

Restricted general funds are those resources that have been designated by the grant provider in meeting the objectives of the academy.

Restricted fixed asset funds are those funds relating to the long term assets of the academy used in delivering the objectives of the academy.

Unrestricted funds are those which the Governing Body may use in the pursuance of the academy's objectives and are expendable at the discretion of the Governors.

Transfer of funds from General Annual Grant restricted general funds to restricted fixed asset funds are to fund assets for which no capital grant was received.

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the academy trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG that it could carry forward at 31 August 2024.

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

### 20 Funds

(Continued)

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

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2023 £'000
<b>Restricted general funds</b>					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	2,378	25,882	(26,992)	531	1,799
Start up grants	-	44	(44)	-	-
UIFSM	-	125	(125)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	1,600	(1,600)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA COVID-19 funding	-	399	(399)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	1,596	(1,596)	-	-
Other government grants	-	2,962	(2,962)	-	-
Other restricted funds	-	653	(653)	-	-
Pension reserve	(3,083)	731	(240)	1,170	(1,422)
	<u>(705)</u>	<u>33,992</u>	<u>(34,611)</u>	<u>1,701</u>	<u>377</u>
<b>Restricted fixed asset funds</b>					
Inherited on conversion	19,552	5,468	-	-	25,020
DfE group capital grants	11,810	1,193	(1,352)	829	12,480
Private sector capital sponsorship	113	-	-	-	113
	<u>31,475</u>	<u>6,661</u>	<u>(1,352)</u>	<u>829</u>	<u>37,613</u>
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>30,770</u>	<u>40,653</u>	<u>(35,963)</u>	<u>2,530</u>	<u>37,990</u>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General funds	3,122	696	(537)	(531)	2,750
	<u>3,122</u>	<u>696</u>	<u>(537)</u>	<u>(531)</u>	<u>2,750</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>33,892</u>	<u>41,349</u>	<u>(36,500)</u>	<u>1,999</u>	<u>40,740</u>

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

#### 20 Funds

(Continued)

#### Total funds analysis by academy

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were allocated as follows:		
Marus Bridge Primary School	194	255
Three Towers Alternative Provision	138	19
Plantation Primary School	53	35
Kirkby High School	1,816	1,732
Hawkley Hall High School	872	904
The Heys School	575	561
Farington Primary School	194	75
Whitley Village School	65	54
The Acorns Primary and Nursery School	208	106
Central services	181	808
	<u>4,296</u>	<u>4,549</u>
Total before fixed assets fund and pension reserve	4,296	4,549
Restricted fixed asset fund	33,642	37,613
Pension reserve	(526)	(1,422)
	<u>37,412</u>	<u>40,740</u>
Total funds	<u><u>37,412</u></u>	<u><u>40,740</u></u>

#### Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching and educational support staff	Other support staff costs	Educational supplies	Other costs excluding depreciation	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Marus Bridge Primary School	1,549	225	169	310	2,253	2,133
Three Towers Alternative Provision	2,871	359	300	214	3,744	3,732
Plantation Primary School	2,053	526	160	388	3,127	655
Kirkby High School	5,544	1,064	992	1,988	9,588	8,754
Hawkley Hall High School	5,842	965	626	651	8,084	8,198
The Heys School	3,023	1,075	380	282	4,760	4,847
Farington Primary School	813	99	72	199	1,183	1,202
Whitley Village School	364	57	56	90	567	530
The Acorns Primary and Nursery School	1,636	275	168	134	2,213	2,355
Central services	833	995	91	1,254	3,173	2,742
	<u>24,528</u>	<u>5,640</u>	<u>3,014</u>	<u>5,510</u>	<u>38,692</u>	<u>35,148</u>
	<u><u>24,528</u></u>	<u><u>5,640</u></u>	<u><u>3,014</u></u>	<u><u>5,510</u></u>	<u><u>38,692</u></u>	<u><u>35,148</u></u>

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

#### 21 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted funds: General £'000	Fixed asset £'000	Total Funds £'000
<b>Fund balances at 31 August 2024 are represented by:</b>				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	33,723	33,723
Current assets	2,665	5,906	-	8,571
Current liabilities	-	(4,275)	(72)	(4,347)
Non-current liabilities	-	-	(9)	(9)
Pension scheme liability	-	(526)	-	(526)
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>2,665</b>	<b>1,105</b>	<b>33,642</b>	<b>37,412</b>

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted funds: General £'000	Fixed asset £'000	Total Funds £'000
<b>Fund balances at 31 August 2023 are represented by:</b>				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	37,762	37,762
Current assets	2,750	5,517	-	8,267
Current liabilities	-	(3,469)	(129)	(3,598)
Non-current liabilities	-	-	(20)	(20)
Provisions for liabilities	-	(249)	-	(249)
Pension scheme liability	-	(1,422)	-	(1,422)
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>2,750</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>37,613</b>	<b>40,740</b>

#### 22 Pension and similar obligations

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

The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2020, and that of the LGPS related to the period ended 31 March 2022.

Contributions amounting to £579k were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2024 (2023: £485k) and are included within creditors.

##### Teachers' Pension Scheme

###### Introduction

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

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

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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#### 22 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

##### 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 latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 27 October 2023, with the SCAPE rate, set by HMT, applying a notional investment return based on 1.7% above the rate of CPI. The key elements of the valuation outcome are:

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

The result of this valuation will be implemented from 1 April 2024. The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2028.

The employer's pension costs paid to the TPS in the period amounted to £3,511,637 (2023: £2,909,326).

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

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

##### Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contributions are as noted below. The agreed contribution rates for future years are 17.1 - 22.3% for employers and 5.5 - 12.5% for employees.

Kirkby High School has entered into an agreement with the trustees to make contributions in addition to normal funding levels of £156,500 for 2023/24, £163,700 for 2024/25 and £171,200 for 2025/26.

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



# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

#### 22 Pension and similar obligations (Continued)

Total contributions made	<b>2024</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2023</b> <b>£'000</b>
Employer's contributions	1,535	1,335
Employees' contributions	449	375
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total contributions	1,984	1,710
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Principal actuarial assumptions	<b>2024</b> <b>%</b>	<b>2023</b> <b>%</b>
Rate of increase in salaries	3.35 - 4.1	3.75 - 4.3
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	3.65 - 2.7	2.9 - 2.95
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5	5.2 - 5.3
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

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

	<b>2024</b> <b>Years</b>	<b>2023</b> <b>Years</b>
Retiring today		
- Males	18 - 21	18.1 - 20.8
- Females	22.9 - 23.9	23.3 - 23.6
Retiring in 20 years		
- Males	19.4 - 22.2	21.1 - 22.1
- Females	24.5 - 25.3	24.7 - 25.1
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

#### Sensitivity analysis

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

	<b>2024</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2023</b> <b>£'000</b>
0.1% decrease in the real discount rate	+5%	+5%
1 year increase in member life expectancy	+3%	+3%
0.1% increase in the salary increase rate	+1%	+1%
0.1% increase in the pension increase rate	+4%	+3%
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

22 Pension and similar obligations	(Continued)	
<b>Defined benefit pension scheme net liability</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Scheme assets	25,739	21,921
Scheme obligations	(23,525)	(20,807)
Net asset	2,214	1,114
Restriction on scheme assets	(2,740)	(2,536)
Total liability recognised	(526)	(1,422)
<b>The academy trust's share of the assets in the scheme</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>Fair value</b>	<b>Fair value</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Equities	15,897	13,571
Government bonds	380	388
Other bonds	3,039	2,450
Cash	1,309	1,081
Property	2,438	2,150
Other assets	2,676	2,281
Total market value of assets	25,739	21,921
The actual return on scheme assets was £2,041,000 (2023: £(82,000)).		
<b>Amount recognised in the statement of financial activities</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Current service cost	1,199	1,456
Interest income	(1,194)	(836)
Interest cost	1,117	955
Total amount recognised	1,122	1,575

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

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

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

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22 Pension and similar obligations	(Continued)	
<b>Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
At 1 September 2023	20,807	21,211
Obligations acquired on conversion	-	1,613
Current service cost	1,186	1,447
Interest cost	1,117	955
Employee contributions	449	375
Actuarial loss/(gain)	173	(4,615)
Benefits paid	(207)	(179)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 August 2024	23,525	20,807
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>Changes in the fair value of the academy trust's share of scheme assets</b>		
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
At 1 September 2023	21,921	18,128
Assets acquired on conversion	-	2,344
Interest income	1,181	827
Actuarial (gain)/loss	860	(909)
Employer contributions	1,535	1,335
Employee contributions	449	375
Benefits paid	(207)	(179)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 August 2024	25,739	21,921
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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

	Notes	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)		(201)	4,849
Adjusted for:			
Net surplus on conversion to academy		-	(6,216)
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income		(1,085)	(1,193)
Investment income receivable	6	(1)	(1)
Defined benefit pension costs less contributions payable	22	(336)	121
Defined benefit pension scheme finance (income)/cost	22	(77)	119
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets		1,331	1,352
Loss on disposal of fixed assets		2	-
Decrease in stocks		-	1
Decrease/(increase) in debtors		142	(140)
Increase in creditors		754	100
Stocks, debtors and creditors transferred on conversion		-	17
(Decrease)/increase in provisions	18	(249)	67
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</b>		<b>280</b>	<b>(924)</b>

#### 24 Analysis of changes in net funds

	1 September 2023 £'000	Cash flows £'000	31 August 2024 £'000
Cash	6,963	446	7,409
Loans falling due within one year	(16)	5	(11)
Loans falling due after more than one year	(20)	11	(9)
	<u>6,927</u>	<u>462</u>	<u>7,389</u>

#### 25 Long-term commitments

##### Operating leases

At 31 August 2024 the total of the academy trust's future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases was:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Amounts due within one year	83	77
Amounts due in two and five years	132	163
	<u>215</u>	<u>240</u>

# THE ROWAN LEARNING TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

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#### 25 Long-term commitments

(Continued)

The academy buildings for Kirkby High School are provided on a PFI contract, which at 31 August 2024 had a further 9 years to run. No financial commitment has been included for this contract in the above note because of a shortfall in available information to calculate the cost over the life of the contract. The basic annual payment and affordability gap paid for the year to 31 August 2024 was £1,411k (2023: £1,411k).

#### 26 Related party transactions

Owing to the nature of the academy 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. The following related party transactions took place in the financial period:

The academy was related to Winstanley College, Wigan, by Mrs Louise Tipping who is a Member of the Rowan Learning Trust and Principal of Winstanley College. £17,060 (2023: £15,199) expenses were paid on account of the Rowan Learning Trust for the provision of student careers advisor service.

The academy was related to Makerfield Academy Trust, Wigan, by Mrs Louise Tipping who is a Member of the Rowan Learning Trust and a trustee of Makerfield Academy Trust. £nil (2023: £3,788) expenses were paid on account of the Rowan Learning Trust for the provision of initial teacher training on behalf of LFP (funds held at Hawkley Hall High School on behalf of the Learning Futures Partnership (LFP)).

All transactions involving such organisations are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023, including notifying ESFA of all transactions made on or after 1 April 2019 and obtaining their approval where required, and in accordance with the academy trust's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures relating to connected and related party transactions.

#### 27 Post balance sheet events

After the year end, on 1 November 2024, Orrell Holgate Academy and Orrell Lamberhead Green Academy joined The Rowan Learning Trust.

#### 28 Members' liability

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