

**Report of the Trustees and
Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st August 2020
for
The Societas Trust**

Hardings
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor
6 Marsh Parade
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1DU

**Contents of the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020**

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The Societas Trust

Reference and Administrative Details for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

Members	Mr R Knight Mr R Palin Mr G Weir	
Trustees (Directors)	Mr C Austin (Appointed 6.12.2019) Mrs C Bartley Mrs A Bradshaw Mrs C Dudson Mrs M Hughes Mrs G Jenkins Mr J Lovatt Mr R Machin Mr G Weir	
Senior Management Team	Mr J Lovatt Miss J Cope Mrs N Gibson Mr S Martin Mrs E Preston Miss C Pearson	CEO and Accounting Officer Head of Ash Green Primary Academy Head of Ellison Primary Academy Head of Goldenhill Primary Academy Head of Gladstone Primary Academy Head of Summerbank Primary Academy
Registered Office	The Societas Trust The Hub Office Ellison Primary Academy Ellison Street Wolstanton Newcastle under Lyme ST5 0BL	
Company Registration Number	09987031 (England and Wales)	
Auditors	Hardings Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor 6 Marsh Parade Newcastle-under-Lyme Staffordshire ST5 1DU	
Bankers	Lloyds Bank PLC	
Solicitors	SAS Daniels LLP	

The Societas Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

The trustees of The Societas Trust (the Trust) present their annual report together with the audited financial statements for the period from 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020. The annual report serves the purposes of both a trustees' report, and a directors' report including a strategic report under company law.

The Trust was incorporated on 4th February 2016 and operates as a multi academy trust (MAT) for pupils aged 3 - 11. At 31st August 2020, there were five academies within the Trust with a combined capacity of 2,092 and a roll of 1,955 (including Nursery children) at the end of the Academic Year 2020. The academies (settings) were:

- Ash Green Primary Academy
- Ellison Primary Academy
- Gladstone Primary Academy
- Goldenhill Primary Academy
- Summerbank Primary Academy

For the purpose of this report, the terms trustee and director are interchangeable.

Objectives and activities

Objects, Vision and aims

The Objects of the Trust are as follows:

- To advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum ("the mainstream Academies");
- To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of the areas in which the Academies are situated 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 economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving of life of the said inhabitants.

The vision of the Trust is to create a sustainable, professional community where all learners are valued and encouraged to achieve their potential, and all individuals are respected.

Our maxim is - Great Learning Opportunities for all!

The Trust's aims are:-

- To improve educational standards for all children;
- To achieve operational efficiencies through economies of scale;
- To increase flexibility of human resources;
- To improve potential for the retention of staff;
- To increase opportunity for continuing professional development;
- To establish succession planning programmes for all leaders;
- To provide peer to peer support and challenge;
- To enhance sustainability to maintain the pace of school improvement;
- To strengthen relationships between diverse communities;
- To further embed a celebration of diversity and mutual respect.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020**

**Objectives and activities
Objectives, Actions and Outcomes**

The Trust's main objectives for the period from 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020, linked to the Trust's Strategic Development Plan, are outlined below, as is the progress towards the agreed milestones to measure success:

1. Ensure that each setting uses Philosophy for Children (P4C) to create a community of enquiry that improves pupils' questioning and reasoning skills; their search for alternative perspectives and connections; critical thinking (so that they are open to changing viewpoints); and outcomes in reading, maths and writing. By summer 2020 all settings will meet the SAPERE Bronze criteria, by summer 2021 most settings will meet Silver criteria; by 2022 some settings meet Gold criteria. The Trust Board's P4C Steering Group meets termly to direct and monitor progress towards meeting these objectives.

Outcomes

All settings have met the SAPERE Bronze criteria and achieved the standard.

Actions that have taken place at each setting are outlined below:

Actions that have taken place are outlined below:

- P4C leader is in place and holds regular sessions in his/ her own classroom to use as a model of good practice to others;
- Children are familiar with the 10 step philosophical enquiry model;
- Children can ask open questions, moving towards philosophical questions;
- Children are beginning to collaborate to help make sense of ideas from other people;
- Children review the class enquiry and their own participation against simple educational and behavioural criteria;
- All class teachers have facilitated a minimum of 6 enquiries over the term;
- Teachers ask open procedural (Socratic) questions;
- P4C practitioners identify connections and distinctions, reasons and examples, for children in P4C sessions, and support children to recognise them;
- Teachers record evidence of using a range of starting points for enquiry;
- Teachers review and reflect upon their P4C sessions in order to inform planning of future sessions.

2. All settings to participate fully in the Sandwell Wellbeing project that aims to support and improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all stakeholders by developing teaching and learning practices that promote resilience, support social and emotional learning, and cultivate a love of learning among the whole school community: all settings to achieve the charter mark by summer 2022. The Trust Board's Inclusion and Wellbeing Steering Group meets termly to direct and monitor progress towards achieving these objectives.

Outcomes

Settings are participating fully in the project and are on track to achieve the charter mark by summer 2022.

Actions that have taken place include:

- Audit outcomes are being used to inform action plans in each of the settings;
- The Sandwell wellbeing curriculum "Healthy Mind, Happy Me" has been introduced to all settings, using developmentally appropriate lesson plans and starter assemblies;
- The next steps are to further develop the wellbeing of staff across the trust with a working party leading this project;
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the focus on mental health and wellbeing continues; however, the decision has been made to postpone the pursuit of the charter mark at this time.

**Report of the Trustees
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Objectives and activities

3. Extend the Capacity (skills and ability) of all staff and governors so that by summer 2022: staff and governors have the expertise and the ambition necessary to fulfil their role; leaders at all levels can monitor, evaluate, diagnose and improve the areas for which they are responsible; can lead by example; and can manage and deploy resources effectively. This is to be achieved, among several other initiatives, through participating in peer-to-peer, coaching and mentoring, and collaborative training. The Trust Board's Developing a Professional Community Steering Group meets termly to direct and monitor progress to achieving these objectives.

Outcomes

Good progress has been made towards this objective and we are on track to achieve the desired outcomes.

Actions that have taken place include:

- All settings have updated the annual workforce and governance audits that continue to give the Trust a clear picture of the qualifications, expertise and aspirations of all staff and governors;
- The audits continue to be used to inform CPD provision and opportunities across the Trust and in individual settings;
- The Trust has developed a range of career pathways to guide and support the aspiration of all staff and provide opportunities within each setting and across the trust;
- The Trust Board is on track to ensure that each LGB effectively challenges and holds leadership to account for the performance of each setting; this is evidenced in the minutes of meetings and reviewed as part of the Academy Performance Review (APR) cycle;
- Academy Performance Reviews this academic year evidence that all academies are deemed 'effective' in relation to Leadership & Management with the aim that all are deemed 'highly effective' by July 2022;
- Coaching and mentoring is being used effectively, by senior leaders across the Trust, as part of a Peer to Peer process that challenges peers and helps to raise the overall quality of provision;
- The Peer to Peer process has been extended to the P4C Leaders and plans are in place to extend this process to wider MAT to MAT collaborations.

4. Ensure that each setting has a rich, inspiring and highly stimulating curriculum, including extracurricular provision that fully meets the needs of all pupils and leaves them with highly memorable and influential experiences, and overcomes some of the barriers to cementing a broader community and a corporate understanding. This is to be achieved, in part, through Trust wide annual cultural capital projects including Shakespeare and drama, Music, Sport and Art Projects. The Trust Board's Curriculum Steering Group meets termly to direct and monitor progress towards achieving these objectives. The work of the Really Useful Generation Students' Group (RUGS) also supports this endeavour.

Outcomes

Good progress has been made towards this objective and we are on track to achieve the desired outcomes.

Actions that have taken place include:

- The Trust's agreed set of curriculum aims, building upon the vision and values of the Trust, are being used to inform the curriculum in each of our settings;
- Curriculum planning has been undertaken in all settings to ensure that the individual curriculums meet Ofsted requirements and the needs of the communities they serve;
- Each setting has explored and clarified a clear intent, implementation and impact within their curriculum design models;
- Key leaders (defined by Executive) have engaged in joint CPD in a number of areas;
- Pupil voice through RUGS has developed a set of 'values for learning' for the Trust;
- Peer to Peer processes have been implemented to empower senior leaders to affirm good practice/ make considered change in individual setting's curriculums;
- Research is informing practice across the Trust and action research is impacting on identified areas for curriculum development and pedagogy in individual settings;
- Trust projects were scheduled to enhance the cultural capital of children across the Trust and also enable children from very different communities to collaborate. Current projects include: Shakespeare; Young Voices; Olympics. Unfortunately a number of projects were postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic;

**Report of the Trustees
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Objectives and activities

- A Trust wide conference was held in January 2020 at Keele University with a focus on oracy and metacognition, with Cambridge Professor Neil Mercer as the keynote speaker.

5. To grow the Trust through a process of 'growth through collaboration' with other likeminded leaders and organisations, in order to serve a pupil population (excluding nursery children) of no less than 3,000 by the summer of 2022. The Executive Board directs and monitors progress towards achieving this objective.

Outcomes

Good progress has been made towards this objective and the Trust, alongside a partner maintained nursery school, continues to work collaboratively with other settings and Multi-Academy Trusts. Collaborative opportunities continue to be explored to ensure that the Trust is on track to achieve the desired outcomes.

Actions that have taken place include:

- The Trust continues to engage collaboratively with other likeminded leaders and organisations to create purposeful and impactful partnerships that lead to improvements in children's outcomes and effective use of resources - the plan includes the option of settings either working in greater alignment with or actually joining the Trust;
- Collaborations are in place focusing on projects of mutual value to ensure each organisation's strategic vision is strengthened and the needs of the communities they each serve are met;
- A shared strategic vision and plan is in place, which has been developed in partnership with all key Trust stakeholders, and is based on mutual values and ethos, and the needs of the communities each setting serves;
- Key statutory policies, procedures (GDPR, HR, Finance etc.) and systems have been harmonised across the Trust and are being shared with other likeminded organisations;
- Due diligence processes have been drawn up and will be implemented as appropriate;
- Next steps include a review of Trust vision and values exercise involving all key stakeholders, development of a growth plan, and support framework.

Public benefit

The Trust provides educational services to all children in the local areas served by its settings and offers facilities to a variety of local community groups outside the normal school hours. The Trust's settings also offer a wide range of family and adult learning opportunities and the facilities are frequently used by external agencies. The Trust fully complies with all statutory guidance.

The Societas Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

Strategic report

Achievement and performance

Charitable activities

The Societas Trust is unique, it was founded as the result of the voluntary collaboration between the head teachers and governing boards of likeminded primary settings who shared a belief that the needs of children are best met when schools and teachers collaborate and cooperate and are able to maintain close links with the communities they serve.

Whilst it is crucial for us to support the development of the unique identity of each setting in the partnership, we also believe that by developing and promoting innovative and creative approaches to learning and teaching across the Trust, we will ensure that our children have the very best opportunities to excel academically and develop socially.

We believe that children learn best and thrive in environments that promote and foster self-belief, the love of learning and high expectations of themselves and others.

The settings that now comprise The Societas Trust are:-

- Ash Green Primary Academy - joined on 1st December 2017;
- Ellison Primary Academy - joined on 1st October 2016;
- Gladstone Primary Academy - joined on 1st September 2017;
- Goldenhill Primary Academy - joined on 1st June 2017;
- Summerbank Primary Academy - joined on 1st September 2017.

We also have an associate member setting, Oaklands Nursery School, which entered into a collaboration agreement with the Trust on 4 July 2019.

The Trust's achievements and performance, in addition to the outcomes outlined above, during the period from 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020 are as follows (lists are not exhaustive):-

For Teaching and Learning:-

- Ellison Primary Academy had a section 8 inspection in September 2019. The outcome was that the academy continues to be a good school and there was enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if Ofsted were to carry out a section 5 inspection at that time;
- The termly Academy Performance Review (APR) has been embedded within the culture and more closely aligned to the Ofsted framework;
- The Annual Performance Review (APR) and external teaching and learning review processes continue to ensure quality assurance of teaching and learning judgements;
- The Trust's Academy Performance Review (APR) process, at the end of the 2019/20 academic year, supports the view that provision across the Trust is effective overall;
- Unfortunately, statutory assessment was postponed this year however previous years pupils outcomes for combined reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 1 and 2 continued to improve year on year;
- Staff from Nursery to Year 6 have had continued opportunities to share assessment and other practices supported by experts in their field;
- Judgements in reading, writing and maths continue to be standardised and moderated, when appropriate, to ensure consistency and accuracy of judgement; this work is supported by trained external moderators;
- A Nursery and Reception Baseline has been consistently implemented;
- Home School Link Workers/ Learning Mentors/ SENCOs and other groups continue to share good practice in how to best support our most vulnerable pupils;
- A framework has continued to ensure a consistent entitlement for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Societas settings;
- Subject and other leaders have had opportunity to share best practice, work together on key priorities and develop their leadership skills;
- Working closely with colleagues from Worcester University, senior leaders have continued to explore how best to develop and implement Peer to Peer support to enhance leadership at all levels, including pupils;
- This work expanded this year to include MAT to MAT collaborations;
- The Trust has provisioned a digital learning platform for interactive remote learning to take place across the trust as and when required.

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For Professional Development:-

- The Annual Performance Review (APR) process continues to ensure quality assurance of each settings self-evaluation which is externally moderated;
- Leaders continue to engage in continued professional development including the NPQEL, NPQSL and NPQML programmes;
- The NLE from Oaklands continues to support CPD for Early Years across the Trust and also works with our voluntary sector nursery partners;
- The Trust continues to engage in joint CPD to develop the next generation of teachers and support staff to serve our communities and beyond;
- The Trust continues to be a hub for Initial Teacher Education working closely with the local SCITT (KNSTE) and other ITT providers;
- The Trust has established a partnership with an independent CPD partner (Southstar);
- A number of working groups and networks to share best practice continue to meet regularly; areas of priority include Phonics, Science, SEND, Art, PE and Home School Link Workers/ Learning Mentors;
- The work of leaders is complemented by bringing in experts and other key strategic partners (including the Keele and North Staffordshire Teacher Education (KNSTE); Worcester University; Blackfriars TSA; SAPERE; Local Research School etc.);
- Each setting continues to have a Lead Teacher Educator acting as a beacon and disseminator of best practice, to support aspiring, newly and recently qualified teachers;
- The Trust's Developing a Professional Community (DPC) Steering Group continues to meet and develop policy and CPD plans to support development at all levels within the organisation, including governance;
- A member of the Executive Board sits on the strategic board of the local SCITT (KNSTE);
- A member of the Executive Board sits on the strategic board of a local teaching school alliance (Blackfriars TSA);
- A member of the Executive Board sits on the strategic board of a local teaching school alliance (Blackfriars TSA);
- A member of a local teaching school alliance (Blackfriars TSA) sits on the Trust's DPC Steering Group;
- An induction policy and programme for Newly and Recently Qualified Teachers is being consistently implemented;
- Newly and Recently Qualified Teachers are also supported through a network led by Lead Teacher Educators from across the Trust;
- The Trust Board continues to engage to build further expertise and capacity and to plan joint governor training opportunities.

For Curriculum Enrichment and Cultural Capital:-

- The MAT Student Council, the Really Useful Generation Students Group (RUGS), whose job it is to "inspire and develop exciting strategies for high quality learning across the MAT", continue to meet with the support of the CEO and Executive Board;
- Opportunities for children from across the Trust to collaborate and work together continue: e.g. the Shakespeare Project, Young Voices, Olympics etc.;
- KS2 Children from across the Trust were involved in the Young Voices concert at the Manchester Arena in January 2020;
- Unfortunately, a number of projects were postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key Academic Performance Indicators

The Trust monitors the educational performance of its settings on a termly basis through the Academy Performance Review (APR) cycle, which forms part of the Trust's overarching Improving Education Strategy - a copy of which can be found under 'Key Information' on the Trust's website.

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Standards Achieved in Key Stages 1 and 2

Unfortunately, statutory assessment was postponed this year due to the Pandemic. However, previous years' pupil outcomes for combined reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 1 and 2 continued to improve year on year.

Below are the validated 2019 results for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 for the Trust as a whole (comparable results for 2018 are in brackets):

(Age Related Expected (ARE) is the appropriate term for a pupil meeting the required year group/ end of key stage standard.)

TRUST AS A WHOLE

Academy			National	
Key Stage 1				
Trust				
77%	(73%)	Year 2 ARE and above Reading	75%	Year 2 ARE and above
73%	(67%)	Year 2 ARE and above Writing	69%	Year 2 ARE and above
78%	(72%)	Year 2 ARE and above Maths	76%	Year 2 ARE and above

Combined Reading Writing and Maths

68%	Year 2 ARE and above	65%	Year 2 ARE and above
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Greater Depth

25%	(28%)	Year 2 ARE and above Reading	25%	Year 2 ARE and above
22%	(19%)	Year 2 ARE and above Writing	15%	Year 2 ARE and above
23%	(25%)	Year 2 ARE and above Maths	22%	Year 2 ARE and above

Combined Greater Depth Reading Writing and Maths

15%	Year 2 ARE and above	11%	Year 2 ARE and above
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Key Stage 2

Trust				
83%	(85%)	Year 6 ARE and above Reading	73%	Year 6 ARE and above
83%	(82%)	Year 6 ARE and above Writing	78%	Year 6 ARE and above
88%	(82%)	Year 6 ARE and above Maths	79%	Year 6 ARE and above
83%	(84%)	Year 6 ARE and above SPAG	78%	Year 6 ARE and above

Combined Reading Writing and Maths

73%	(76%)	Year 6 ARE and above	65%	Year 6 ARE and above
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Greater Depth

27%	(27%)	Year 6 ARE and above Reading	27%	Year 6 ARE and above
20%	(21%)	Year 6 ARE and above Writing	20%	Year 6 ARE and above
26%	(23%)	Year 6 ARE and above Maths	27%	Year 6 ARE and above
27%	(36%)	Year 6 ARE and above SPAG	36%	Year 6 ARE and above

Combined Greater Depth Reading Writing and Maths

9%	Year 6 ARE and above	11%	Year 6 ARE and above
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The Societas Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

Strategic report

Achievement and performance

Key financial performance indicators

The Trust scrutinises the financial performance of its settings through regular meetings between the CEO, CFO and academy senior leaders; the CEO reports any issues to governors/ trustees; internal controls are also rigorously tested through the Internal Audit Process, which forms part of the Trust's Finance Policy and Procedures - a copy of which can be found under 'Key Information' on the Trust's website.

Promoting the success of the Academy Trust

In-line with section 172(1)(a) to (f) of the Companies Act 2006, the directors of the company act in a way most likely to promote the success of the company, having due regard to the following:

- the likely consequences of any decision in the long term
- the interests of the company's employees
- the need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others
- the impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment
- the desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct
- the need to act fairly as between members of the company

Financial review

Financial position

The Trust's accounting year is from 1st September to 31st August in any year.

Most of the Trust's income is derived from the ESFA in the form of recurrent grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received during the year to 31st August 2020, and associated expenditure, are shown as restricted funds in the statement of financial activities.

All expenditure of the Trust is made in line with the Trust's Financial Policy and Procedures Manual which supports the provision of Education of all the pupils on roll.

During the year ended 31st August 2020, total incoming resources amounted to £10,262,688. This income was received from the ESFA and local authority in connection with the educational operations of the Trust along with other funds generated by the Trust. Notes 2-5 show a detailed breakdown of the incoming resources.

Resources expended for the period totalled £11,259,720 which included a £638,000 cost attributed to the LGPS (included in governance costs within note 7) along with depreciation on tangible fixed assets of £650,340. There was an actuarial loss on the LGPS of £349,000..

In terms of the day to day operation of the Trust and excluding the non-monetary costs mentioned above in connection with depreciation and the LGPS movements, there was a closing carry forward surplus of £108,482 at 31st August 2020, excluding the deficit balance from the Ash Green conversion in 2017/18.

A full breakdown of the balances can be seen at note 19 along with explanation of the deficit recovery plan.

Investment policy and objectives

Investments must be made only in accordance with written procedures approved by the Trust Board under the Trust's separate Investment Policy contained within the Trust's Finance Policy and Procedures Manual, which is reviewed annually.

Reserves policy

The Budget is managed in line with the Trust's Reserves Policy which is contained within the Trust's Finance Policy and Procedures Manual, and is reviewed annually. The review considers all income and expenditure and any future commitments.

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Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

Strategic report

Financial review

Going concern

The Trust has sufficient funds to meet its financial obligations for the forthcoming year; the financial statements prepared on a "going concern" basis. This assessment has been made to ensure the sustainability of the Trust as a result of ongoing monitoring of the financial risks, income, reserves, liquidity and short and long term planning, including projected pupil numbers and the more recent impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

Principal risks and uncertainties

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than eliminate it. Actions to mitigate the risk have been planned for. Principal risks and uncertainties as noted by the trustees are:-

- Change in government funding regime;
- Pupil numbers in decline resulting in loss of revenue - this could be caused by pupils failing to make good progress, an unsatisfactory Ofsted report and loss of reputation;
- Staffing issues such as loss of Senior Management, epidemic sickness or long term sickness rendering the academy unable to function effectively and efficiently;
- Inappropriate or insufficient financial controls and systems;
- Fraudulent activity;
- Financial commitments made without adequate authorisation.

Financial and risk management objectives and policies

Risk is managed through sound financial practice stipulated in the Trust's Finance Policy and Procedures Manual and Risk Management Policy. The Trust and each setting also operate a scheme of financial delegation and there are regular reviews, through an annual internal audit process (Including Peer Review), to ensure that Trust and ESFA financial policy and procedures are correctly adhered to. The CEO has operational oversight of the internal audit process.

The Trust is committed to strengthening the efficacy of the finance function across the Trust and retaining expertise in each setting. Financial software and cloud based systems have been installed across the Trust to allow collaborative working. Trust financial policy and procedures have been developed and adopted by each setting to improve internal auditing; also, with the advice from the Trust's external auditors, to obtain and sustain best practice. The CEO, CFO and Academy Business Managers also meet regularly to standardise processes and maximise economies of scale through combined procurement etc. Standardisation and sharing of best practice is also supported by the peer review process.

Fundraising

All fundraising taking place across the Trust conforms to all recognised standards as defined under the provisions of the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016.

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Strategic report

Future plans

The Societas Trust's Strategic Development Plan (SDP) is the responsibility of the CEO to develop, working closely with the Executive Board. The plan identifies the strategic developments that the Societas Trust will make during the next three years. It is a strategic statement of intent that guides our work and allows stakeholders to monitor progress towards reaching our objectives.

The plan has been written following consideration of:

- The current OFSTED framework for inspections for schools and outcomes from school self-evaluation and the Annual Performance Review (APR) outcomes that have been externally quality assured;
- Local and national developments that we know will have an impact on our settings over the coming years.

The plan reflects the Trust's vision, ethos and values and has been created by the Executive Board and approved by the Trust Board. It represents the core of our drive to ensure high standards and should be viewed on the context of the overall strategy for development.

The Strategic Development Plan also informs individual setting plans; each setting also has an operational plan that demonstrates how it will implement the strategic statement, and also additional elements and actions to address local need.

The CEO, working alongside the Executive Board, monitors and evaluate impact through the Academy Performance Review (APR) process and reports termly to the Trust Board.

To achieve continuous school improvement, the Trust has a commitment to training and professional development which supports staff and governance at all levels in the organisation. All Societas settings have a commitment to participate in a school led improvement model and work collaboratively with other schools and academies both within and beyond the MAT to share best practice and accomplish improvements through partnership working. The SDP will operate within the boundaries of sound financial management.

The developments over the next three years are to continue to raise standards for all pupils across the trust so that settings are judged 'highly effective' for provision and outcomes through the Trust's Academy Performance Review (APR) process by summer 2023. This is to be achieved by reaching the milestones as outlined under each of the following six priority areas in our Strategic Development Plan:

1. Ensuring recovery plans and strategies are in place, across the Trust, that support all pupils, including SEND and disadvantaged, to catch up for lost teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic; the focus being on high quality teaching, targeted academic support and wider strategies;
2. Ensuring that each setting continues to use Philosophy for Children to create a community of enquiry that improves pupils' questioning and reasoning skills, their search for alternative perspectives and connections, critical thinking (so that they are open to changing viewpoints) and outcomes in reading, maths and writing, so that: by summer 2022 most settings will meet the SAPERE Silver criteria (some choosing to submit for the award); by summer 2023 some settings meet Gold criteria (with some choosing to submit for the award);
3. Supporting and improving the mental health and emotional well-being of all stakeholders by developing whole school strategies that support wellbeing, and teaching and learning practices that promote resilience, support social and emotional learning, and cultivate a love of learning among the whole Trust community. All settings to have achieved the Sandwell Mental Health Chartermark by summer 2023;
4. Extending the Capacity (skills and ability) of the workforce and governors, so that by summer 2023: all staff and governors have the expertise and the ambition necessary to fulfil their role; leaders can monitor, evaluate, diagnose and improve the areas for which they are responsible; can lead by example; and can manage and deploy resources effectively. This is to be achieved, among several other initiatives, through participating in peer-to-peer, coaching and mentoring, and collaborative governance training;

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Strategic report

5. Ensuring that each setting has a rich, inspiring and highly stimulating curriculum, including extracurricular provision that fully meets the needs of all pupils and leaves them with highly memorable and influential experiences, and overcomes some of the barriers to cementing a broader community and a corporate understanding: this is to be achieved, in part, through the Shakespeare, Music, PE, and Art Projects, and the work of the Really Useful Generation Students' Group (RUGS);
6. Growing the Trust through a process of 'growth through collaboration' with other likeminded leaders and organisations, to serve a pupil population (excluding nursery children) of no less than 3,000 pupils by the summer of 2023.

Progress in each of these priority areas will be closely monitored by the CEO, working alongside the Trust Board's Committees, Steering Groups and Executive Board. The Strategic Development Plan will continue to be evaluated and developed in line with the needs of each of our settings.

Structure, governance and management

Charity constitution

The 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 Trust.

The trustees of The Societas Trust are also the directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law. The Charitable Company is known as The Societas Trust. Details of the trustees who served throughout the year, except as noted, 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 Trust 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

In accordance with normal commercial practice the Trust has purchased insurance to protect trustees and local governors from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on the Trust's business. The insurance provides cover up to £5,000,000 being the total amount payable during any one Period of Insurance.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

The members of the Trust are responsible for the appointment of trustees to the Directors' Board (Trust Board). When a vacancy for a trustee occurs, nominations are sought from both stakeholders and externally, and recruitment is dependent on an individual's complimentary skillset. Currently, each setting is represented on the Trust Board by the Chair of their Local Governing Board, who cannot also be a member of staff. The Trust Board is also responsible for the appointment of the Trust Appointed Governors on each setting's Local Governing Board (LGB). Other candidates are nominated in line with the published Instrument of Government for each setting. Parent and Staff governors are either elected or appointed in line with the articles of association and scheme of delegation.

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Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

Structure, governance and management

Organisational structure

Directors' Board (or Trust Board)

The organisational structure of the Trust consists of a Directors' Board (Trust Board) currently comprising the Chair of the Local Governing Board from each of the Trust's settings; 3 independent trustees; and the CEO. The Chair of the Trust Board is also a member of the charitable company. The CEO is also a trustee and sits on the Trust Board in a non-voting capacity. The Trust Board has two main committees, Education and Resources, and a number of steering groups linked to the Trust's Strategic Development Plan. An independent trustee chairs the Trust Board and steering groups. The Trust Board now meets 6 times a year; committee agendas are also now discussed by the Trust Board at each meeting. Decisions delegated to the Trust Board, its committees and steering groups, and the Local Governing Boards are defined in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation, terms of reference and Finance Policy and Procedures Manual, which can be found under 'Key Information' on the Trust's website.

The Directors' Board governs the activities of the Trust and oversees the work of each setting's LGB. Specifically, this includes setting general policy; adopting an annual strategic plan and budget; and monitoring the Trust's financial performance and quality of educational provision, through a variety of scrutiny processes which are externally moderated. The structure consists of the main Board and two subcommittees: Resources (Including Audit, Pay and Personnel) and Education. The Directors are also ultimately responsible for the strategic direction of the Trust ensuring that its aims are met and its ethos maintained: they do this through the formation of steering groups to direct and monitor progress towards the Trust's strategic aims as defined in the Trust's Strategic Development Plan. The Trust Board also monitors quality of provision and educational outcomes through the Trust's Improving Education Strategy, which is reviewed annually.

Trust Leadership

The Central Management Team (CMT) of the Trust are the CEO (also Accounting Officer), the Executive Education Representative (also Deputy CEO), and the Compliance and Finance Manager (also Chief Finance Officer). The CEO leads and manages the Trust alongside the Executive Board, implementing strategy and policy in conjunction with the Directors' Board and its committees generally. The Executive Board comprises the CMT, Head Teachers, and Deputy Head Teachers (by invitation of the CEO). The Executive Board advises and makes recommendations to the Trust Board and its committees on setting general policy and making major decisions about the direction of the Trust. Members of the Executive Board also sit on the Trust's steering groups. Head Teachers, as employees of the Trust, also lead and manage their respective academies and report to the CEO.

Local Governing Boards

The Articles of Association requires each setting to have a Local Governing Board (LGB), which is empowered through the Scheme of Delegation to oversee the work and outcomes of individual settings within the Trust. These LGBs comprise a mix of local people including staff, parents, and others appointed by the Trust for their skills and experience. They act as a critical support to the Head Teacher and the setting. A member of the Trust Board (usually the CEO) also sits on each LGB in an advisory capacity. The LGB is responsible for ensuring high standards of education and financial effectiveness; they review the overall impact of each setting within the community it serves and are responsible for ensuring the Trust's ethos and vision are upheld and Trust policies complied with.

Student Representatives (RUGS)

The MAT Student Council (the Really Useful Generation Students Group - RUGS) promotes student collaboration and "inspires and develops inspirational strategies for high quality learning across the MAT". Two children (usually a boy and a girl) are elected from each academy biennially, and they meet at least once a term. The RUGS also act as ambassadors for the Trust as a whole. The CEO and members of the Executive Board attend the RUGS Group. Sadly, the group have not been able to meet since the onset of the Pandemic.

Induction and training of new trustees

All trustees and local governors are provided, on appointment, with relevant copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and any other document that will support them in carrying out their role. All Trust level policies and procedures are reviewed on an annual cycle by the Trust Board and can be found under 'Key Information' on the Trust's website. As part of their induction, new trustees and local governors are also invited to attend an 'effective governance' training course hosted by a local training provider. Governor training resources are also made available on the Trust's website under 'Key Information'. All directors and governors are also added to the Trust subscription to the National Governors' Association.

The Societas Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

Structure, governance and management

Key management remuneration

Arrangements for setting the pay of the Trust's Key Management Personnel (CMT) is based upon performance management targets linked to organisational performance, including pupil outcomes. Executive pay is also benchmarked against other Multi Academy Trusts of similar size and socio-demographics.

Related parties

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

Engagement with employees

The Trust operates a philosophy of collaboration at all levels. Employees are actively encouraged to take part in operational meetings supporting creative initiatives. CPD and development activities are supported. Information on the performance of individual settings is cascaded through staff meetings, and staff have access to records of meetings via the trust cloud system. There is transparency of communication and consultation with staff on any changes that may impact employees. The Trust also has a strong Trade Union partnership (JCNC), where consultation is made and agreement sought prior to any changes to policies and procedures that impact employees. The HR policies support equality and diversity.

Engagement with suppliers, customers and others

The Trust aims to be transparent in communications and activities with all stakeholders. The Website provides key information and regular updates from the CEO to all stakeholders. The Trust benefits from MAT to MAT collaboration, with the settings also taking part in various community initiatives. In addition, collaboration exists on educational initiatives with Educational Institutions, including Worcester University and Keele University. The Trust aims to foster positive relationships with suppliers complying with legislation and mutual policies. Individual settings engage with parents through their individual communication policy, whilst the trust utilises the website as the main communicate medium. This has been especially valuable during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Risk management

The trustees are responsible for the management of the risks faced by all the Trust's settings. Financial and non-financial risks for each setting are identified and assessed in a Trust risk register which includes contingency and business continuity planning. Actions taken and actions required to control these risks are noted throughout the year. The major risks to which the Trust is exposed have been reviewed annually and systems have been developed to monitor and control those risks to mitigate any impact that they may have in the future

Funds held as custodian for others

There are no funds held as Custodian Trustee on behalf of others

The Societas Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting

UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020

Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh) 2,092,309

Energy consumption breakdown (kWh)

Gas	1,317,497
Electricity	711,211
Transport Fuel	3,601

Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO₂e

Gas Consumption	242.25
Owned transport - minibuses	0.60
Total Scope 1	242.85

Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO₂e

Purchased electricity	179.81
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Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO₂e

Business Travel in Employee owned Vehicles	0.32
Total Gross emissions in metric tonnes CO ₂ e	422.98

Intensity Ratio

Tonnes CO ₂ e per pupil	0.21
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Quantification and Reporting Methodology

The Trust has followed the 2019 HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol - Corporate Standard, and the 2020 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

Intensity Measurement

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

Measures Taken to Improve Energy Efficiency

The Trust is committed to responsible energy management and will practice energy efficiency throughout the organisation, wherever it is cost effective. The Trust recognises that climate change is one of the most serious environmental challenges currently threatening the global community. As educational establishments, our settings encourage staff and pupils in energy efficient practices.

The following energy efficient measures have been implemented

- Through the successful award of two Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bids (circa £405,000), the heating system in one of our settings has been completely replaced with the primary objective of energy efficiency - representing a total project cost of £463,000;
- Due to Covid-19, there is an increase in video conferencing which it is anticipated will continue to improve efficiency and reduce travel costs and emissions;
- Lighting upgrades are completed where necessary: a CIF Bid has also been submitted to improve the lighting quality and efficiency at one setting;
- Measures are also being introduced to be mindful to switch off lights in rooms when staff/children leave them;
- Children at one setting conducted an environmental project to measure emissions at peak times during the day to raise awareness of the damage caused and to encourage parents to not use their vehicles to bring their children to and from school.

The Societas Trust

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020**

Statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

So far as the trustees are aware, there is no relevant information (as defined by Section 418 of the Companies Act 2006) of which the academy trust's auditors are unaware, and each trustee has taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make them aware of any audit information and to establish that the academy trust's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditors, Hardings, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 17th December 2020 and signed on the board's behalf by:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'G Weir', written over a horizontal line.

G Weir - Trustee

The Societas Trust

Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

Scope of Responsibility

As trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that The Societas Trust (the Trust) has an effective and appropriate system of internal control, of financial controls 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.

The trustees have delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the CEO, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform within 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 Societas Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. The CEO is also responsible for reporting to the Trust Board any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information of governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities.

The Trustees have set up two committees, Education and Resources, to assist the decision making of the Trust Board by enabling more detailed consideration to be given to all educational and financial matters within the scheme of delegation. Committee agendas are now covered in the half termly meetings of the Trust Board. The committee Terms of Reference are:-

Resources Committee:-

- To make recommendations to the Trust Board with regard to central services and budget;
- To oversee the scrutiny and risk management of the individual setting budgets;
- To oversee policy and procedure implementation at each setting with regard to staffing, safeguarding and facilities;
- To recommend to the Trust Board the proportion of the overall budget to be delegated to individual settings;
- To recommend the Pay Policy to the Trust Board;
- To enter into contracts up to the limits of delegation and within an agreed budget (set by Directors);
- To authorise payments within agreed financial limits;

Improving Education Strategy

- To evaluate the effectiveness of each setting to ensure a coherent and strategic approach to educational improvement, ensuring that every child receives a good education;
- To monitor and make judgements about standards and quality of provision;
- To identify any Societas settings that are potentially at risk;
- To provide bespoke and tailored support to ensure rapid improvement;
- To challenge and support the Head Teacher and Chair of the Local Governing Board;
- To monitor and review the school improvement plan for each setting against measurable success criteria;
- To evaluate progress being made by providers and to report termly to the Trust Board.

Education Committee:-

- To oversee the Improving Education Strategy;
- To oversee the implementation of the curriculum policies set by each setting;
- To approve the performance management policies and procedures as recommended by the Executive Board;
- To approve the staff code of conduct as recommended by the Executive Board;
- To oversee the implementation of the admissions policy and the exclusion and reinstatement of pupils;
- To make recommendations to the Trust Board, on an annual basis, those policies which will be developed by the Trust and mandatory for all Trust settings;
- To enter into contracts up to the limits of delegation and within an agreed budget (set by Directors);
- To authorise payments within agreed financial limits;

Improving Education Strategy

- To evaluate the effectiveness of each setting to ensure a coherent and strategic approach to educational improvement, ensuring that every child receive a good education;
- To hold settings to account regarding standards achieved;
- To monitor and make judgements about standards and quality of provision;
- To identify any Societas settings that are potentially at risk;
- To moderate school self-evaluation by coordinating the APR and External Health Checks using an external provider(s) for all Trust settings;
- To provide bespoke and tailored support to ensure rapid improvement;
- To challenge and support the Head Teacher and Chair of the Local Governing Board;
- To monitor and review the school improvement plan for each setting against measurable success criteria;
- To evaluate progress being made by providers and to report termly to the Trust Board.

The Societas Trust

Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

Governance Attendance

The Trust Board has formally met 5 times from the 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020, and attendance was as follows:

	Meetings Attended	Out of a Possible
Mr C Austin (appointed 6.12.2019)	3	4
Mrs C Bartley	5	5
Mrs A Bradshaw	2	5
Mrs C Dudson	3	5
Mrs M Hughes	4	5
Mrs G Jenkins	5	5
Mr J Lovatt	5	5
Mr Roger Machin	4	5
Mr G Weir	5	5

Review of Value for Money

As the Accounting Officer, the CEO has responsibility for ensuring that the Trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. The CEO understands that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The CEO considers how the Trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the Trust Board where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data where available.

The CEO, as Accounting Officer for the Trust, working alongside the CFO and Executive Board, has delivered improved value for money during the year by:-

- Improving educational standards across all academies within the Trust;
- Ensuring central and setting budgets are sustainable over the medium term;
- Maximising 'zero cost (£)' opportunities for professional development by sharing good practice across the Trust
- The CFO working closely with the Business Managers at each setting also secures Trust wide procurement ensuring economies of scale are fully exploited.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The Trust's system of internal control (Internal Audit Process) is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve Trust policies, aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The risk-based system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise risks to achieving Trust and ESFA 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 Societas Trust for the year ended 31 August 2020 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The Trust Board and the Executive Board have reviewed the key risks to which the Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Trustees are of the view that there is a formal on-going process of identifying, evaluating and managing the Trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period ending 31st August 2020 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Trust Board.

The Societas Trust

Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

The Risk and Control Framework

The Trust's system of internal control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures, including the segregations of duties and a system of financial delegation and accountability, contained within the Trust's Finance and Procedures Manual. In particular it includes:-

- Comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems, with a cycle for annual budget setting and periodic financial reports (included as an appendix to the Trust's Finance and Procedures Manual), which is reviewed and agreed by the Trust Board;
- Regular meetings between the CEO, CFO and senior leaders at each setting to review financial performance with any issues/ recommendations being presented to governors/ trustees;
- Regular reviews by the Trust Board, its Resources Committee and Local Governing Boards at each setting of financial reports which indicate financial performance against the budget forecasts in the current year and over the medium term;
- Establishment of and regular reviews of, via the termly 'Academy Performance Review' (APR) Framework, key performance indicators for academic performance of each setting, conducted jointly by the CEO and Trust Education Partner(s);
- Delegation of financial authority and appropriate segregation of duties;
- A comprehensive internal audit processes (including peer reviews with external oversight) with regular monitoring of resultant action plans at all levels of governance within the organisation;
- Identification of financial and non-financial risks and risk management via maintenance of a risk register for each setting and the Trust as a whole.

The trustees have introduced a programme of Internal Control (Internal Audit including Peer to Peer review with external oversight), for the purpose of evaluating and managing the control framework, which is contained as an appendix in the Trust's Finance Policy and Procedures Manual. The CEO has operational oversight of this process. Internal Audit Reports along with recommendations and action plans are considered periodically by the Trust and Executive Boards and by each setting's Local Governing Board.

Review of Effectiveness

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

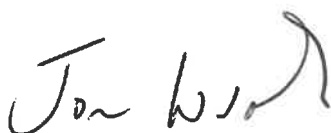
- Termly reviews of, via the termly 'Academy Performance Review' (APR) Framework, key performance indicators for academic performance of each setting, conducted jointly by the CEO and Trust Education Partner(s);
- Regular meetings between the CEO, CFO and Head Teachers and Business Managers at each setting to review financial performance against the budget forecasts in the current year and over the medium term;
- The ongoing work of external auditor;
- The financial compliance self-assessment and internal audit process cycle;
- The work of the CFO and Academy Business Managers' Group, who have responsibility for the development, maintenance and review of the internal control framework and financial systems: This group is also advised by the Trust's external auditor.

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the results of the CFO and Academy Business Managers' review of the system of internal control, and is assured that a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on 17th December 2020 and signed on its behalf by:



G Weir - Trustee



J Lovatt - Accounting Officer

The Societas Trust

**Statement on Regularity, Propriety and Compliance
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020**

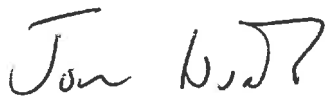
As accounting officer of The Societas Trust I have considered my responsibility to notify the academy trust board of trustees and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding received by the academy trust, 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 Academies Financial Handbook 2019.

I confirm that I and the academy trust 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 Academies Financial Handbook 2019.

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.

J Lovatt - Accounting Officer

17th December 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Lovatt', written in a cursive style.

The Societas Trust

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

The trustees (who act as governors of The Societas Trust and are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2019 to 2020;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

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

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

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

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 17th December 2020 and signed on its behalf by:



G Weir - Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of The Societas Trust

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Societas Trust (the 'academy trust') for the year ended 31st August 2020 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and the Accounts Direction 2019 to 2020 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the academy trust's affairs as at 31st August 2020 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 Academies Accounts Direction 2019 to 2020.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the academy trust's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. 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.

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 Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of The Societas Trust

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 Report of the Trustees.

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

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

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the academy 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 academy trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

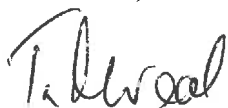
Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

Use of our report

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



Timothy McNeal FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Hardings
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor
6 Marsh Parade
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1DU

17th December 2020

Independent Reporting Accountant's Assurance Report on Regularity to The Societas Trust and the Education and Skills Funding Agency

In accordance with the terms of our engagement and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2019 to 2020, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by The Societas Trust during the period 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020 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 Societas Trust and the ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to The Societas Trust and the 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 Societas Trust and the ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

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

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of The Societas Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education and the Academies Financial Handbook, extant from 1st September 2019, 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 2019 to 2020. 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 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020 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 Academies Accounts Direction 2019 to 2020 issued by the 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.

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 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Hardings
Chartered Accountants
6 Marsh Parade
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1DU

17th December 2020

The Societas Trust

**Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020**

					31/8/20	31/8/19
	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fixed asset fund £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments from						
Donations and capital grants	2	-	225,092	28,232	253,324	349,221
Charitable activities						
Funding for the academy's educational operations	3	-	-	9,547,554	9,547,554	9,030,507
Other trading activities	4	-	-	461,350	461,350	634,562
Investment income	5	440	-	-	440	517
Total		440	225,092	10,037,136	10,262,668	10,014,807
Expenditure on						
Charitable activities						
Academy's educational operations	3	-	650,340	10,609,380	11,259,720	10,779,389
Total	6	-	650,340	10,609,380	11,259,720	10,779,389
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		440	(425,248)	(572,244)	(997,052)	(764,582)
Transfers between funds	19	(12,932)	16,622	(3,690)	-	-
Other recognised gains/(losses)						
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit schemes		-	-	(349,000)	(349,000)	(1,598,000)
Net movement in funds		(12,492)	(408,626)	(924,934)	(1,346,052)	(2,362,582)
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		120,974	30,067,009	(5,971,396)	24,216,587	26,579,169
Total funds carried forward		108,482	29,658,383	(6,896,330)	22,870,535	24,216,587

The notes form part of these financial statements

The Societas Trust (Registered number: 09987031)

**Balance Sheet
31st August 2020**

				31/8/20	31/8/19
	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fixed asset fund £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	13	-	29,627,832	-	29,627,832
					30,057,872
Current assets					
Debtors	14	-	-	389,748	389,748
Cash at bank		108,482	30,551	413,672	552,705
					573,759
		108,482	30,551	803,420	942,453
					930,193
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	15	-	-	(858,590)	(858,590)
					(882,837)
Net current assets/(liabilities)		108,482	30,551	(55,170)	83,863
					47,356
Total assets less current liabilities		108,482	29,658,383	(55,170)	29,711,695
					30,105,228
Creditors					
Amounts falling due after more than one year	16	-	-	(255,160)	(255,160)
					(289,641)
Pension liability	20	-	-	(6,586,000)	(6,586,000)
					(5,599,000)
NET ASSETS		108,482	29,658,383	(6,896,330)	22,870,535
					24,216,587
Funds	19				
Unrestricted funds				108,482	120,974
Restricted funds				22,762,053	24,095,613
Total funds				22,870,535	24,216,587

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 17th December 2020 and were signed on its behalf by:



G Weir - Trustee

The Societas Trust

**Cash Flow Statement
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020**

	Notes	31/8/20 £	31/8/19 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	23	(26,286)	(24,437)
Net cash used in operating activities		(26,286)	(24,437)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(220,300)	(301,120)
Capital grants from DfE/EFA		225,092	292,294
Interest received		440	517
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		5,232	(8,309)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		(21,054)	(32,746)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		573,759	606,505
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		552,705	573,759

The notes form part of these financial statements

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020**

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the academy trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland', the Academies Accounts Direction 2019 to 2020 issued by the ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

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

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

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the academy trust has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Grants

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

General Annual Grant is recognised in full in the Statement of Financial Activities in the year for which it is receivable and any abatement in respect of the 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 it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations

Donations are recognised on a receivable basis (where there are no performance related conditions), where it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

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.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

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 financial statements until they are sold. This income is recognised within 'Income from other trading activities'.

Donated fixed assets

Where the donated good is a fixed asset it is measured at fair value, unless it is impractical to measure this reliably, in which case the cost of the item to the donor should be used. The gain is recognised as income from donations and 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.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the academy trust to that expenditure, 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 accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Charitable activities

Costs of charitable activities are 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.

Governance costs

These include the costs attributable to the academy trust's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees' meetings and reimbursed expenses.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its estimated useful life.

Leasehold land & buildings	- over the expected useful economic life
Improvements to property	- 2% on cost
Fixtures and fittings	- 15% on reducing balance
Motor vehicles	- 25% on reducing balance
Computer equipment	- 33% on cost

Note that land, included within Leasehold land and buildings is not depreciated. The leasehold buildings and any associated improvements are depreciated in line with the expected remaining useful economic life as per the professional valuation carried out following conversion.

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

Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with the aid of specific grants, either from the government or from the private sector, they are included in the Balance Sheet at cost and depreciated over their expected useful economic life. 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 such assets is charged to the restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities so as to reduce the fund over the useful economic life of the related asset on a basis consistent with the academy trust's depreciation policy.

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020**

1. Accounting policies - continued

Tangible fixed assets

Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with unrestricted funds, depreciation on such assets is charged to the unrestricted fund.

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 as detailed in note 14. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

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

Financial liabilities - trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in notes 15/16. 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.

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.

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 Education and Skills Funding Agency/Department for Education.

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

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

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit 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 (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 20, 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 2016 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31st August 2020. 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.

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020**

1. Accounting policies - continued

Pension costs and other post-retirement 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.

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 prospective unit credit method. As stated in note 20, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution scheme for accounting purposes and the contributions recognised in the period to which they relate.

The LGPS is a funded 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 operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred. Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in other recognised gains and losses.

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in other recognised gains and losses.

2. Donations and capital grants

	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Donations	28,232	56,927
Grants	225,092	292,294
	<u>253,324</u>	<u>349,221</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Capital Grants from ESFA/LA	<u>225,092</u>	<u>292,294</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

3. Funding for the academy's educational operations

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31/8/20 Total funds £	31/8/19 Total funds £
DfE/ESFA revenue grant				
General Annual Grant(GAG)	-	7,222,341	7,222,341	7,013,212
Other DfE/ESFA Grants	-	1,451,352	1,451,352	1,128,549
Other government grant				
Local Government Grants	-	8,673,693	8,673,693	8,141,761
	-	873,861	873,861	888,746
	-	9,547,554	9,547,554	9,030,507

Included in the Other DfE/ESFA Grants above, is £28,336 in relation to a claim to cover exceptional Covid-19 expenditure.

4. Other trading activities

	31/8/20 £	31/8/19 £
Hire of facilities	23,735	19,163
Catering income	154,901	212,134
Educational visits	61,417	85,502
Staff insurance credits	55,445	78,374
Other income	165,852	239,389
	<u>461,350</u>	<u>634,562</u>

Other income includes parental contributions for Nursery and Before and After School Clubs etc.

5. Investment income

	31/8/20 £	31/8/19 £
Deposit account interest	440	517

6. Expenditure

	Non-pay expenditure			31/8/20	31/8/19
	Staff costs £	Premises £	Other costs £	Total £	Total £
Charitable activities					
Academy's educational operations					
Direct costs	6,565,220	-	427,216	6,992,436	6,651,217
Allocated support costs	1,567,366	1,614,058	1,085,860	4,267,284	4,128,172
	<u>8,132,586</u>	<u>1,614,058</u>	<u>1,513,076</u>	<u>11,259,720</u>	<u>10,779,389</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

6. Expenditure - continued

Net resources are stated after charging/(crediting)

	31/08/20	31/08/19
	£	£
Auditor's remuneration (as auditor)	10,000	10,000
Auditor's remuneration (other)	13,000	13,000
Depreciation - leased assets	526,849	523,058
Depreciation - owned assets	123,491	124,474

7. Charitable activities - academy's educational operations

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	31/8/20 Total funds	31/8/19 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Direct costs	-	6,992,436	6,992,436	6,651,217
Support costs	-	4,267,284	4,267,284	4,128,172
	-	11,259,720	11,259,720	10,779,389

	31/8/20 Total	31/8/19 Total
	£	£
Analysis of support costs		
Support staff costs	1,567,366	1,453,579
Depreciation	650,340	647,532
Technology costs	87,129	70,726
Premises costs	841,183	899,377
Other support costs	348,391	388,331
Governance costs	772,875	668,627
Total support costs	4,267,284	4,128,172

Included in governance costs is the £638,000 (2019: £448,000) charge in respect of the LGPS.

8. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

The CEO only receives remuneration in respect of services provided undertaking the role of CEO and not in respect of the role of Trustee. The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

		2020	2019
		£	£
J Lovatt	Remuneration	70,000-75,000	65,000-70,000
	Pension contributions paid	15,000-20,000	15,000-20,000

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31st August 2020 nor for the year ended 31st August 2019.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

9. Staff costs

	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Wages and salaries	6,106,412	5,944,830
Social security costs	507,073	480,572
Operating costs of defined benefit pension schemes	1,425,862	1,129,969
	<u>8,039,347</u>	<u>7,555,371</u>
Supply teacher costs	93,239	81,022
	<u>8,132,586</u>	<u>7,636,393</u>

Included in the above staff costs is £2,800 (2019 : £2,000) relating to redundancy costs.

The average number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the academy trust during the year was as follows:

	31/8/20	31/8/19
Teachers	86	82
Admin & Support	238	228
Management	9	10
	<u>333</u>	<u>320</u>

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

	31/8/20	31/8/19
£60,001 - £70,000	4	5
£70,001 - £80,000	3	2
	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>

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 £566,811 (2019: £526,705).

10. Trustees' and officers' insurance

In accordance with normal commercial practice the academy has purchased insurance to protect trustees/governors and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy business. The insurance provides cover up to £5,000,000 on any one claim. The cost of this insurance is included in the total insurance cost.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

11. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fixed asset fund £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
Income and endowments from				
Donations and capital grants	-	292,294	56,927	349,221
Charitable activities				
Funding for the academy's educational operations	-	-	9,030,507	9,030,507
Other trading activities	-	-	634,562	634,562
Investment income	517	-	-	517
Total	<u>517</u>	<u>292,294</u>	<u>9,721,996</u>	<u>10,014,807</u>
Expenditure on				
Charitable activities				
Academy's educational operations	-	647,532	10,131,857	10,779,389
Total	<u>-</u>	<u>647,532</u>	<u>10,131,857</u>	<u>10,779,389</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	<u>517</u>	<u>(355,238)</u>	<u>(409,861)</u>	<u>(764,582)</u>
Transfers between funds	<u>(21,201)</u>	<u>17,963</u>	<u>3,238</u>	<u>-</u>
Other recognised gains/(losses)				
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit schemes	-	-	(1,598,000)	(1,598,000)
Net movement in funds	<u>(20,684)</u>	<u>(337,275)</u>	<u>(2,004,623)</u>	<u>(2,362,582)</u>
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	141,658	30,404,284	(3,966,773)	26,579,169
Total funds carried forward	<u>120,974</u>	<u>30,067,009</u>	<u>(5,971,396)</u>	<u>24,216,587</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

12. Central services

The Academy Trust provided the following central services during the year:

- financial services
- legal services
- insurance services
- payroll services
- audit services
- cloud based storage services
- education improvement services
- governor training and support
- professional development
- data protection officer services
- governance cost of the trust
- policy compliance
- HR services

The Trust charges for these services based on a top-slice of GAG of 3.6% or full recharge where costs relate to a specific Academy.

The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2020 £	2019 £
Ash Green Primary Academy	49,544	41,904
Ellison Primary Academy	45,518	42,000
Goldenhill Primary Academy	25,456	24,660
Gladstone Primary Academy	54,676	48,564
Summerbank Primary Academy	66,980	53,220
Total	242,174	210,348

13. Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold land & buildings £	Improvements to property £	Fixtures and fittings £
Cost			
At 1st September 2019	30,060,000	246,614	431,831
Additions	-	163,668	15,760
At 31st August 2020	30,060,000	410,282	447,591
Depreciation			
At 1st September 2019	671,735	1,299	104,328
Charge for year	521,958	4,891	50,554
At 31st August 2020	1,193,693	6,190	154,882
Net book value			
At 31st August 2020	28,866,307	404,092	292,709
At 31st August 2019	29,388,265	245,315	327,503

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

13. Tangible fixed assets - continued

	Motor vehicles £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
Cost			
At 1st September 2019			
Additions	11,226	234,665	30,984,336
	-	40,872	220,300
At 31st August 2020	11,226	275,537	31,204,636
Depreciation			
At 1st September 2019			
Charge for year	4,743	144,359	926,464
	1,621	71,316	650,340
At 31st August 2020	6,364	215,675	1,576,804
Net book value			
At 31st August 2020	4,862	59,862	29,627,832
At 31st August 2019	6,483	90,306	30,057,872

14. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	31/8/20 £	31/8/19 £
Trade debtors		
VAT	10,414	4,873
Prepayments and accrued income	72,723	51,564
	306,611	299,997
	389,748	356,434

15. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	31/8/20 £	31/8/19 £
Trade creditors		
Social security and other taxes	252,147	222,300
Other creditors	118,881	119,553
ESFA Creditor : Abatement of GAG	156,616	136,320
Accruals and deferred income	55,170	82,755
	275,776	321,909
	858,590	882,837

Deferred Income

	£
Deferred income as at 1st September 2019	138,930
Resources deferred in the year	173,045
Amounts released from previous years	(168,930)
Deferred income as at 31st August 2020	173,045

At the balance sheet date, the academy trust was holding funds received in advance from the ESFA in respect of the Universal Infant Free School Meals commencing in September 2020 along with rates relief for 2020/21.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

16. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
ESFA Creditor : Abatement of GAG	255,160	289,641

See note 19 for additional explanation re the Abatement of GAG

17. Leasing agreements

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Within one year	23,405	24,248
Between one and five years	12,507	33,671
	35,912	57,919

18. Members' liability

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

19. Movement in funds

	At 1.9.19	Net movement in funds	Transfers between funds	At 31.8.20
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	120,974	440	(12,932)	108,482
Restricted funds				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	65,756	(65,756)	-
Deficit on conversion (Ash Green)	(372,396)	-	62,066	(310,330)
Pension deficit	(5,599,000)	(987,000)	-	(6,586,000)
Restricted fixed asset fund	30,067,009	(425,248)	16,622	29,658,383
	24,095,613	(1,346,492)	12,932	22,762,053
TOTAL FUNDS	24,216,587	(1,346,052)	-	22,870,535

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

19. Movement in funds - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	440	-	-	440
Restricted funds				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	7,222,343	(7,156,587)	-	65,756
Other DfE/ESFA grants	1,451,352	(1,451,352)	-	-
Local authority grants	873,861	(873,861)	-	-
Other	489,580	(489,580)	-	-
Pension deficit	-	(638,000)	(349,000)	(987,000)
Restricted fixed asset fund	225,092	(650,340)	-	(425,248)
	10,262,228	(11,259,720)	(349,000)	(1,346,492)
TOTAL FUNDS	10,262,668	(11,259,720)	(349,000)	(1,346,052)

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.9.18 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.8.19 £
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	141,658	517	(21,201)	120,974
Restricted funds				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	38,139	(38,139)	-
Deficit on conversion (Ash Green)	(413,773)	-	41,377	(372,396)
Pension deficit	(3,553,000)	(2,046,000)	-	(5,599,000)
Restricted fixed asset fund	30,404,284	(355,238)	17,963	30,067,009
	26,437,511	(2,363,099)	21,201	24,095,613
TOTAL FUNDS	26,579,169	(2,362,582)	-	24,216,587

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

19. Movement in funds - continued

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	517	-	-	517
Restricted funds				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	7,013,213	(6,975,074)	-	38,139
Other DfE/ESFA grants	1,128,549	(1,128,549)	-	-
Local authority grants	888,746	(888,746)	-	-
Other	691,488	(691,488)	-	-
Pension deficit	-	(448,000)	(1,598,000)	(2,046,000)
Restricted fixed asset fund	292,294	(647,532)	-	(355,238)
	<u>10,014,290</u>	<u>(10,779,389)</u>	<u>(1,598,000)</u>	<u>(2,363,099)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>10,014,807</u>	<u>(10,779,389)</u>	<u>(1,598,000)</u>	<u>(2,362,582)</u>

Purposes of unrestricted funds

Included in unrestricted funds includes the surplus on conversion from a local authority school, along with other income generated from the other small donations, etc. which carry no specific restrictions. These funds are available for the academy trust to use as deemed appropriate.

Purposes of restricted funds

The General Annual Grant represents the grant funding received from the ESFA in order to cover the on-going costs of the academy trust. 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 31st August 2020.

Other DfE/ESFA grants received include amounts for Pupil Premium, UIFSM

Local Authority grants include nursery / early years funding as well as funding to support children with special education needs.

Purposes of restricted fixed assets funds

The restricted fixed assets funds reflects resources received by the academy trust to acquire assets for continuing use and furtherance of the trust's aims and objectives. Resources expended reflect the associated depreciation charges as set out on the accounting policies.

During the year, the Trust received monies from the Condition Improvement Fund to assist with projects at both Summerbank Primary Academy and Ellison Primary Academy. The projects will be completed in the 2020/21 academic year. The additional balance carried forward on the restricted fixed asset fund includes monies held to complete these projects.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

19. Movement in funds - continued

Analysis of academies by fund balance

Fund balances at 31st August 2020 were allocated as follows:

	31/08/20 £	31/08/19 £
Ash Green Primary Academy**	(380,428)	(391,543)
Ellison Primary Academy	68,505	25,449
Gladstone Primary Academy	(57,658)	(15,140)
Goldenhill Primary Academy	(40,281)	(27,013)
Summerbank Primary Academy	212,557	156,825
Central	(4,543)	-
	<u>(201,848)</u>	<u>(251,422)</u>
Restricted fixed assets funds	29,658,383	30,067,009
Pension reserve	(6,586,000)	(5,599,000)
	<u>22,870,535</u>	<u>24,216,587</u>
Total	22,870,535	24,216,587

** Note that the Trust agreed to take on the historic deficit associated with Ash Green Primary School. A loan was agreed with the ESFA for the value of the deficit on conversion and is being repaid to the ESFA over a five year period by way of an abatement of GAG. The repayment plan commenced in 2019. Included in the above is the outstanding balance of the deficit at 31st August 2020 £310,330 (2019: £372,396) A detailed recovery plan has been submitted to the ESFA to demonstrate the Trust's ability to repay the loan/deficit.

There has been an increase in the cumulative deficit position for 3 of the 5 settings, which has been brought about mainly due to: loss of Parental income during the schools closure period; additional staffing costs to allow for expansion of pupils from June 2020; a change in Stoke LA's funding methodology for high needs from 1st April 2020. Plans are already in place to recover these deficits over the medium term. The CEO will monitor progress on a regular basis.

Analysis of academies by cost

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

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs (excluding) depreciation £	Total £
Ash Green Primary Academy	1,249,621	395,839	1,671	376,396	2,023,527
Ellison Primary Academy	1,102,269	306,143	52,565	236,541	1,697,518
Gladstone Primary Academy	1,807,584	270,078	33,514	323,716	2,434,892
Goldenhill Primary Academy	814,319	190,258	6,754	281,884	1,293,215
Summerbank Primary Academy	1,596,093	282,381	16,415	436,901	2,331,790
Central Services	-	118,002	-	72,436	190,438
FRS102 Charge	-	-	-	638,000	638,000
	<u>6,569,886</u>	<u>1,562,701</u>	<u>110,919</u>	<u>2,365,874</u>	<u>10,609,380</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

20. 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 Staffordshire County Council. Both are multi-employer defined benefit schemes.

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

The balance due at 31st August 2020, to be paid over in respect of the August 2020 payroll was £157,000. This was paid in September 2020. (Balance due at 31st August 2019 : £136,000).

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 academies. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment.

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

Valuation of the teachers' pension scheme

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31st March 2016. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 5th March 2019. The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

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

The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1st April 2023.

The pension costs paid to TPS in the period amounted to £799,000 (2019: £526,000).

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 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 contribution made for the year ended 31st August 2020 was £792,000 (2019: £753,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £641,000 (2019: £604,000) and employees' contributions totalled £151,000 (2019: £149,000) The agreed contribution rates for future years are 25.2% for employers and the contribution for employees is dependant upon salary banding.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

20. Pension and similar obligations - continued

Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, to a guarantee that, in the event of an academy trust closure, outstanding Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The guarantee came into force on 18th July 2013.

The amounts recognised in the Balance Sheet are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Present value of funded obligations	(12,019,000)	(10,249,000)
Fair value of plan assets	5,433,000	4,650,000
	<u>(6,586,000)</u>	<u>(5,599,000)</u>
Present value of unfunded obligations	-	-
Deficit	<u>(6,586,000)</u>	<u>(5,599,000)</u>
Net liability	<u>(6,586,000)</u>	<u>(5,599,000)</u>

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Current service cost	1,167,000	888,000
Net interest from net defined benefit asset/liability	207,000	215,000
Past service cost	-	61,000
	<u>1,374,000</u>	<u>1,164,000</u>
Actual return on plan assets	<u>(40,000)</u>	<u>141,000</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

20. Pension and similar obligations - continued

Changes in the present value of the defined benefit obligation are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Opening defined benefit obligation	10,249,000	7,207,000
Current service cost	1,167,000	888,000
Past service cost	-	61,000
Contributions by scheme participants	151,000	149,000
Interest cost	207,000	215,000
Benefits paid	(64,000)	(10,000)
Remeasurements:		
Actuarial (gains)/losses from changes in demographic assumptions	(198,000)	(582,000)
Actuarial (gains)/losses from changes in financial assumptions	296,000	2,321,000
Oblig other remeasurement	211,000	-
	<u>12,019,000</u>	<u>10,249,000</u>

Changes in the fair value of scheme assets are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Opening fair value of scheme assets	4,650,000	3,654,000
Contributions by employer	641,000	604,000
Contributions by scheme participants	151,000	149,000
Interest income on plan assets	95,000	112,000
Benefits paid	(64,000)	(10,000)
Return on plan assets (excluding interest income)	(40,000)	141,000
	<u>5,433,000</u>	<u>4,650,000</u>

The amounts recognised in other recognised gains and losses are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Actuarial (gains)/losses from changes in demographic assumptions	198,000	582,000
Actuarial (gains)/losses from changes in financial assumptions	(296,000)	(2,321,000)
Oblig other remeasurement	(211,000)	-
Return on plan assets (excluding interest income)	(40,000)	141,000
	<u>(349,000)</u>	<u>(1,598,000)</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

20. Pension and similar obligations - continued

The major categories of scheme assets as amounts of total scheme assets are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Equities	3,694,000	3,162,000
Bonds	1,087,000	1,023,000
Property	435,000	372,000
Cash	217,000	93,000
	<u>5,433,000</u>	<u>4,650,000</u>

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Balance Sheet date (expressed as weighted averages):

	31/8/20	31/8/19
Discount rate		
Future salary increases	1.7%	1.9%
Future pension increases	2.6%	2.7%
Inflation assumption CPI	2.2%	2.3%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums	2.3%	2.3%
	50%	50%

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

	At 31/8/20	At 31/8/19
Retiring today		
Males		
Females	21.2	21.1
	23.6	23.5
Retiring in 20 years		
Males		
Females	22.1	22.2
	25.0	24.8

Sensitivity Analysis

Change in assumption as at :	Approx monetary amount	
	31/08/20	31/08/19
0.5% decrease in Real Discount Rate		
0.5% increase in Salary Increase Rate	£1,585,000	£1,486,000
0.5% increase in Pension Increase Rate	£181,000	£239,000
	£1,375,000	£1,216,000

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

21. Capital commitments

	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Contracted but not provided for in the financial statements	-	62,000

22. Related party disclosures

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

No related party transactions took place during the year.

23. Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	31/8/20	31/8/19
	£	£
Net expenditure for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	(997,052)	(764,582)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	650,340	647,532
Capital grants from DfE/ESFA	(225,092)	(292,294)
Interest received	(440)	(517)
Increase in debtors	(33,314)	(3,453)
Decrease in creditors	(58,728)	(59,123)
Difference between pension charge and cash contributions	638,000	448,000
Net cash used in operations	(26,286)	(24,437)

24.. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1.9.19	Cash flow	At 31.8.20
	£	£	£
Net cash			
Cash at bank	573,759	(21,054)	552,705
	573,759	(21,054)	552,705
Total	573,759	(21,054)	552,705