Company Registration Number: 12058586 (England & Wales)

JAMES MARKS ACADEMY TRUST

(A company limited by guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

JAMES MARKS ACADEMY TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	E B Billeter J De Braux J Manning K Dunnett (resigned 6 March 2024) S Tyson M Fletcher (appointed 6 March 2024)
Trustees	E B Billeter, Chair M P L Braley, Trustee A J Clarke, Trustee N J Pringle, Vice Chair T N Orchard, Executive Head E F Yebkal, Trustee (resigned 9 December 2024) G A Cunningham, Trustee (appointed 3 October 2023, resigned 4 March 2024) S Newland, Trustee (appointed 1 September 2024) M Watkin, Trustee (appointed 1 December 2024)
Company registered number	12058586
Company name	James Marks Academy Trust
Principal and registered office	11 Box Lane Hemel Hempstead HP3 0DF
Company secretary	A J Crow
Chief executive officer	T Orchard
Senior management team	T Orchard, Executive Head Teacher A J Crow, Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary A Purser, SENCO D Morgan, Deputy Head Roman Fields Academy S Martin, Deputy Head James Marks Academy E Davis, Assistant Head Roman Fields Academy M Reynolds, Assistant Head James Marks Academy
Independent auditors	Streets Audit LLP Chartered accountants & statutory auditors Potton House, Wyboston Lakes Great North Road Bedford MK44 3BZ

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Bankers	Lloyds Bank 198-200 The Marlowes Hemel Hempstead HP1 1BH
Solicitors	Browne Jacobson LLP 15th Floor 6 Bevis Marks London EC3A 7BA

TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024. The annual report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a directors' report under company law.

James Marks Academy Trust consists of the founder provision, Roman Fields and two additional provisions. The Roman Fields Academy is based in Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire. Whilst this is designated as a PRU, we operate in a way that is very different from other Alternative Providers. All our pupils have EHCPs and complex needs, many with multiple diagnoses. The vast majority of pupils have had 18 months out of school, prior to joining our roll, for a variety of reasons. Additionally, all pupils stay with us until the end of the nearest examined key stage, normally KS4, as our intention is to support these pupils to get the outcomes they need to transition successfully to college/sixth form/university. We have become a specialist in autism practice, first achieving accreditation more than seven years ago and following our last review of practice by NAS, we now hold 'specialist advanced' status. Ofsted's current grade for Roman Fields is 'outstanding'.

From September 2022 Hertfordshire County Council has commissioned James Marks Academy Trust to provide education at Forest House Education Centre (FHEC), which is a hospital school for 13-17-year-old pupils, attached to the Forest House Adolescent Unit, a Tier 4 CAMHS inpatient facility on the Kingsley Green hospital site. The Centre provides education for the patients occupying the Adolescent Unit's sixteen beds, while additionally being the sole educator for eight 'day pupils' who are referred by Hertfordshire County Council through ESMA (the LA's tutorial service for pupils who are out of mainstream education for medical reasons). As FHEC is a service and not a school in its own right, it has been linked to Roman Fields Academy for inspections and reporting purposes from the academic year 2023-2024.

From September 2023 the James Marks Academy Trust had permission from the DfE to open a long awaited Free School (The James Marks Academy) temporarily on the Roman Fields site in Hemel Hempstead while we waited for the completion of the construction of our brand new purpose built home. The new school is in Welwyn which has opened in September 2024 is a building designed to take 60 pupils with complex needs when full. In September 2023 20 JMA pupils joined the Roman Fields cohort on the Hemel site, on a temporary basis, for one academic year.

Structure, governance and management

a. Constitution

The Academy is a charitable company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity.

The charitable company's Memorandum of Association is the primary governing document of the Academy.

The Trustees of James Marks Academy Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law.

The charitable company operates as James Marks Academy Trust, company number 12058586.

Details of the Trustees who served during the year, and to the date these accounts are approved are included in the Reference and administrative details on page 1.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

b. Members' liability

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

c. Trustees' indemnities

Trustees benefit from indemnity insurance purchased at the Academy Trust's expense to cover the liability of the Trustees which by virtue of any rule of law, could otherwise be attached to them in respect of any negligence, default, or breach of trust and/or duty of which they may be guilty in relation to the Academy Trust. This is provided so that any such insurance shall not extend to any claim arising from any act, or omission which the Trustees knew to be a breach of trust, or breach of duty, which was committed by the Trustees in reckless disregard to whether it was a breach of trust, or breach of duty, or not. Any such insurance shall not extend to the costs of any unsuccessful defence of a criminal prosecution brought against the Trustees in their capacity as Directors of the Academy Trust. The limit of this indemnity is £10 million for any one loss and any one membership year.

d. Method of recruitment and appointment or election of Trustees

On the 01 April 2021 the Members appointed the Governors of the Roman Fields maintained school as Trustees of the newly formed Academy Trust. In accordance with the Articles of Association, the Board of Trustees shall not be less than three and no more than nine. Trustees shall include the Executive Head and up to eight others, as agreed by Members, who have relevant skills including (without limitation) Governance, Strategic Management, Operations Management, Programme Management, Business Planning, Finance, IT and Recruitment.

Any vacancies or additions to the Board of Trustees are subject to a recruitment process which involves sourcing candidates from Governor for Schools and Inspiring Governance. Prospective trustees complete an application form for consideration by Trustees. A Member and the Chair of Trustees and/or Executive Head will interview the prospective trustee(s) and, if considered suitable, all Members will authorise the appointment. The Trust CFO/Company Secretary will undertake safer recruitment checks before the appointment is confirmed.

e. Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees

The training and induction provided for each new Trustee is dependent upon their existing experience. New Trustees are provided with details of where to find key documents on the Trust website such as the Governance Plan and a buddy system is in place to enable more experienced Governors to support new Governors.

Once clearance checks are made, new Trustees will be provided a Trust Google email and access to the Governor Google Drive which enables them to see all previous documents, minutes, budget and accounting reports and any additional information needed to undertake their role as a Trustee. The Trust will perform a skills audit annually and when, or if gaps are identified; external training courses will be offered to address these issues.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

f. Organisational structure

The Trust is the legal entity which promotes and sponsors academies within the Multi-Academy Trust. The Trust's Scheme of Delegation specifies the structure of the Trust's governance and defines the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities across the structure. The Scheme also describes the processes for appointment and termination of roles.

There are a number of roles involved in the running of the Multi-Academy Trust and these are as follows:

- The Members;
- The Trustees (Board of Directors);
- The Executive Head teacher (Accounting Officer);
- The Chief Finance Officer (Company Secretary);

Articles of Association (AoA)

The 'Articles of Association' have written rules about the running of the company agreed by the Members, Trustees and Company Secretary. The AoA is a standard document dictated by the Department of Education, this specifies how many Trustees there are on the academy trust board, and which category of Trustees they are; it stipulates the term of office as four years for trustees, although they can be re-elected.

The Trust has established committees in order for the Board of Trustees to delegate certain tasks. Trust Committees and Academy Councils (LACs) will operate under a scheme of delegation and/or terms of reference; these powers are within the remit of the Board of Trustees who can adapt these powers every twelve months should they wish. Amendments to the AoA will be within limited parameters, as the consent of the Department for Education ("DfE") and ESFA is required.

Scheme of Delegation

This Scheme identifies the key decisions that are required in connection with the overall governance and management of the Academy Trust and the individual academies within it. This should be read in conjunction with the Terms of Reference for the Committees and the Local Academy Advisory Councils and the Articles of Association of the Academy Trust, which are accessible on the Trust website.

The Scheme will be evaluated annually by the Trustees, as will the work of the board, making adjustments as required. This Scheme of Delegation will operate for all Trust schools with earned autonomy, gradually introduced as the councils (when introduced, as we expand) become more experienced and skilled. If educational or financial standards are, or become, a matter of concern, responsibilities for local councils will be reduced. The bodies that will be identified in the Scheme are as follows:

- Members of the Academy Trust
- Trust Board (which may separately delegate any powers reserved to it to specific committees of the Trust Board)
- Trust Board Committees – Finance, Business and Audit Committee; Standards and GDPR Committee. (Committees of the Trust Board, which operates subject to Terms of Reference set by the Trust Board).
- Local Academy Advisory Council of the school (Committees of the Trust Board, which operates subject to Terms of Reference set by the Trust Board).
- Executive Head / Accounting Officer.
- Chief Financial Officer/Company Secretary.
- Head Teachers of the individual Academies.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Members

In simple terms, the Members "own" the Academy Trust. They have a number of statutory rights, including:

- The right to amend the articles.
- Appoint and remove Members and Trustees.
- Appoint and remove auditors.
- Entitled to receive the annual accounts and report.
- Ensure the success of the trust through focusing on outcomes and financial oversight.

There are 4 Members (we have a vacancy for a fifth) who will meet twice a year (as a minimum), one of which will be at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). One of the Members is also the Chair of Trustees and this will be the only permanent crossover between the board levels, to ensure conflicts of interest are avoided and Members can hold Trustees to account, but equally act as a source of support and encouragement. Members are essentially the custodians of the Trust's values, ensuring that practice throughout the Trust is aligned with our Articles of Association and the Nolan principles of public service.

The DfE's Governance Handbook makes it clear that the role of Members in the running of the trust is minimal and one of oversight and holding the trustee board to account, this is done by:

- Hearing directly from the board of trustees once a year at the AGM.
- Verbally receiving information from the Chair of Trustees at Members meetings on progress made and plans going forward.
- Receiving the trust's annual audited accounts and annual report.
- Access to Governor Hub so that they are able to view approved versions of Trustees' minutes.

If the Members are not satisfied that the trust board is effective, then they will need to step in. If there has not been an external review in any one three-year period, the Members should direct the trust board to convene one. If the trust is underperforming, and the Members cannot see evidence that the Trustees have the capacity to ensure improvement, the Members should seriously consider if they need to remove Trustees and/or appoint different, or additional Trustees.

Trustees

The Board of Trustees will meet 4 times a year; An Annual General Meeting (AGM) with the Members in December, plus 3 Trustee meetings. It is recommended in point 2.3 of the Academies Trust Handbook that 'committees must meet regularly enough to discharge their responsibilities and ensure robust governance and effective financial management'. To ensure the financial oversight of the board finance reports (income and expenditure account, variation to budget report, cash flows and balance sheet) will be uploaded to the Google Drive on a monthly basis and emailed to the Trust Board finance link for scrutiny. The Finance, Business and Audit committee will have delegated responsibility to review and discuss the finances on a termly basis. This occurs two weeks prior to each Trust Board meeting, finance is a standing item on this agenda.

At every Full Trust Board meeting, the Executive Head teacher presents a comprehensive report on the key performance measures of each academy, including predicted academic progression, attendance and absence. Annually the Board will consider in detail, the full suite of published academy data. Ultimately the Trust Board holds each Academy to account for its performance through the Executive Head Teacher.

Under charity law, Trustees have the ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the Trust and for ensuring that it is solvent, well run and delivering the charitable outcomes for which it has been set up. Trustees have several legal duties, which are often described as those of compliance, care and prudence.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

The Articles state there to be a minimum of 7 Trustees, all of whom are appointed by the Members of the Multi-Academy Trust. The Members have appointed 6 Trustees including the Executive Head, all of which have full voting rights and the Members have been actively working to recruit to fill the final vacancy. Trustees may appoint 'co-opted Trustees,' but they may not co-opt an employee of the Trust. The Chair of Trustees will be responsible for governor recruitment, training, mentoring and induction ensuring co-opted Trustees are brought onto the board for their skills and/or that it links into the board's succession plans. Each Trustee will be allocated a responsibility (link role) to report back on at least annually; areas will include Governance recruitment, education and training (as mentioned above), Finance, HR, Standards, Compliance, Strategic Management, SEN (incl CLA), Safeguarding and Premises (including H&S).

The Trustees are responsible for the overall strategic direction of the Trust and holding the Executive Officers to account for delivering agreed priorities. Specific responsibilities include:

- Priority setting and ratification of new projects.
- Holding the executive officers to account for delivery of strategic objectives and the overall performance of the trust and its academies through receiving regular performance data and analysis.
- Appointment, appraisal, discipline and dismissal of the Executive Head Teacher (Executive Head).
- Approval of the annual budget, medium term financial plans, the trust's business plans and risk management policy.
- Approval of the trust's annual report and statutory accounts receiving the annual management letter and governance report of the external auditor and agreement of proposed action.
- Consideration of the trust's overall performance, including financial performance.
- Approval of significant management policies.
- Requiring and receiving the declaration of pecuniary interests that may conflict with those of the trust and determining the extent to which that governor may remain involved with the matter under consideration and maintaining a register(s) of pecuniary interests for Members, Trustees, LACs and staff.

Trust Committees

Devolved from the major Trustee meetings are two sub-committees to oversee and make decisions delegated to them through the schedule of delegation. The sub-committee meetings will be held at least 2 weeks prior to the full board meeting, so that minutes can be shared. The work programme for the sub-committees and academy councils will be agreed by the Trust Board. We would envisage there would be 4/5 Trustees on each sub-committee with the Executive Head sitting on both.

Finance, Business and Audit Committee (which will meet three times a year)

Finance, Business (including Compliance and Risk) and Audit Committee will meet three times a year and hold responsibility for exercising the powers and duties of the MAT Board in respect of matters relating to the finances, staff, and the maintenance of estates and general resources of the Trust. Finance committees are required by the Academies Financial Handbook, these provide assurances to the board that risks are being adequately identified and managed through a risk register, ensuring that oversight extends to all academies within the trust (see point 5).

For academy Trusts with income below £50 million, whilst there is no requirement to have a separate audit committee (though a trust may still choose to do so), there is a requirement to have a committee fulfilling the role of an audit committee. Initially this will fall under the Finance, Business and Audit Committee as a standing item on the agenda; however, as the MAT grows the board may wish to separate this into a third sub-committee.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Standards and GDPR Committee (which will meet twice a year)
Standards and GDPR Committee will meet three times a year and is responsible for exercising powers and duties in relation to educational policies and standards and overseeing the implementation and success of GDPR across the Trust. The purpose of the Committee is to scrutinise educational policies and standards at Trust level and review risks to progress and providing appropriate challenge and support to their schools in terms of Key Performance Indicators.

Trust Executive Team
The Executive Team consists of the Executive Head/CEO and the Chief Finance Officer (CFO). The Executive Team will access professional development opportunities to ensure they are fully informed of the latest advice, developments and 'good practice', so they understand their roles and are able to share this with other schools. Their role is to engage proactively with other MATs, schools, the Local Authority, the Regional Schools Commissioner's office and local colleges/universities.

Executive Head
The Executive Head/ CEO is the most senior executive role in the organisation and accountable for the deployment of public funds, provided by the funding body to the board.

The Executive Head teacher is specifically responsible for ensuring the quality, standards, performance and development of teaching and educational services provided by the Trust and its Academies, although he delegates much of the day to day responsibility to other officers, as agreed in the scheme of delegation.

The Executive Head works closely with leaders to determine the strategic direction and the implementation of the SEND strategy. He also works with the Dacorum and Welwyn and Hatfield mainstream Head teachers and with the Special School Heads' group.

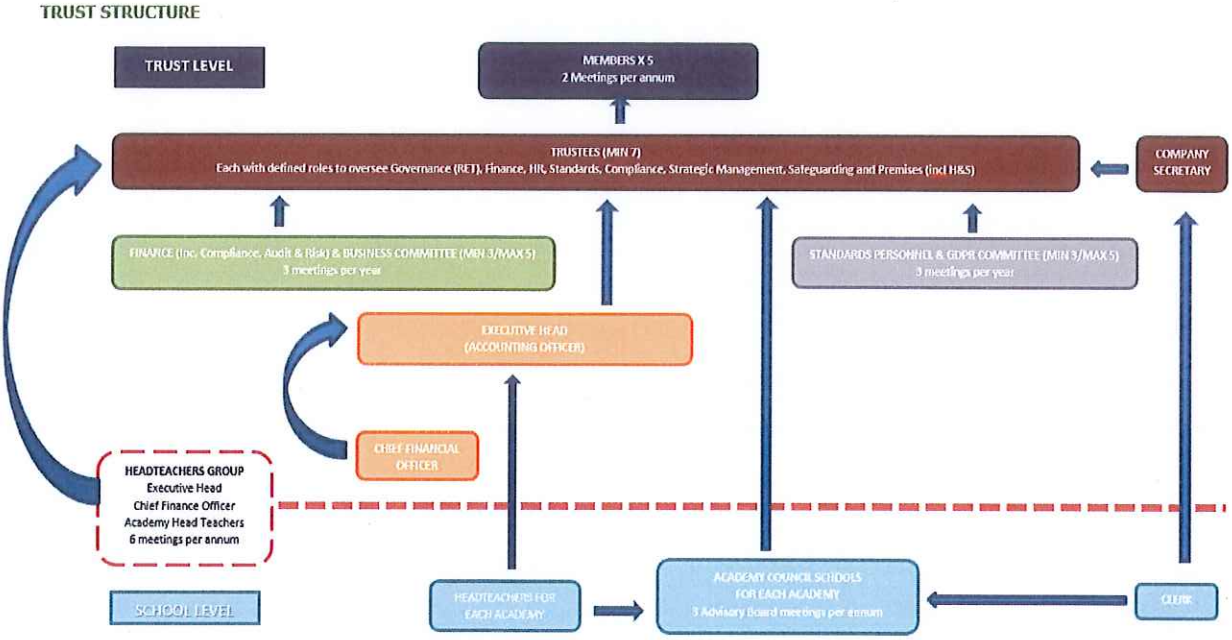
Role of the Chief Financial Officer
The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will be directly responsible to the Executive Head Teacher who is the Accounting Officer (AO) for the MAT and is ultimately responsible for the Trusts proper financial conduct. The AO and CFO, as part of their continuing professional development will complete relevant training and liaise with other successful academies to learn from best practice. The CFO is a member of the Hertfordshire School Business Manager (HASBM) Forum and the Financial Directors (FD) Forum.

Company Secretary
Company Secretary, despite the name, is not an administrative or clerical role, but an officer of the company who shares legal responsibilities with the Trustees. The CFO will fulfil the role of Company Secretary ensuring the efficient administration of the company, particularly with regard to ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and for ensuring that decisions of the board of Trustees are implemented.

Clerk to Board(s)
The CFO will fulfil the role of the Clerk as the responsibilities of the CFO, Company Secretary and Clerk interlink. The CFO has completed the 'Professional Clerking Programme' and has the required skills set as defined by the Clerking Competency Framework 2017.

The main purpose of the Clerk is to provide advice and guidance on governance, constitutional and procedural matters and act as secretary to the boards. The trust will buy into Herts for Learning Governance so that governors have access to governance resources, tools and training. For the Local Advisory Council meetings, a second Clerk will be appointed to support as necessary.

Structure, governance and management (continued)



g. Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

Employees at Trust level are employed on the same terms and conditions of employment as teaching and support staff in the maintained sector. The Trustees have determined the structure and pay scales for all employees.

All staff pay are put through a rigorous performance management process, which include moderation by the Pay and Resources Committee (formed with a minimum of three Trustees, excluding the Executive Head) who will review pay recommendations from Senior Leaders and Heads of Departments.

h. Related parties and other connected charities and organisations

Roman Fields Foundation (Company number 1176911) was set up by Roman Fields School prior to becoming an academy. A small amount of money was generated and subsequently paid into the James Marks Academy Trust bank account to ensure the funds were going back to support the very pupils they were raised for.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

i. Engagement with employees (including disabled persons)

In accordance with The Companies (Miscellaneous Reporting) Regulations 2018, the Trustees summarise below the action taken during the period to introduce, maintain or develop arrangements aimed at:

Providing employees with information on matters of concern to them
All employees have the opportunity to discuss issues of concern by means of regular staff meetings and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by management.

Consulting employees, or their representatives regularly so that the views of employees can be considered in making decisions which are likely to affect their interests
As the Academy has a small number of staff; colleagues are encouraged to come forward by senior leaders and raise any concerns that they may have in relation to the working environment and wellbeing.

When we converted to an Academy Trust all colleagues'/Union reps and parents were kept abreast of developments, particularly around issues that could impact on their rights, families, working conditions etc. The Trust was proactive in addressing individual and collective concerns.

The Trust offers exit interviews for all staff who leave the organisation. This procedure provides feedback for Senior Management and the Trustees.

Encouraging the involvement of employees in the company's performance
The Trust is keen to achieve a common awareness on the part of all employees of the factors affecting the performance of the company.

The Trust values are shared with new employees and form part of their induction.

All teaching staff are asked to assess themselves against the teaching standards during the performance management process. These self-assessments are discussed with their appraiser so areas of development can be identified and ensure support and challenge is provided where necessary.

Staff surveys are regularly completed for Senior Leaders and Trustees, so they are able to understand where improvements can be made and to ensure individual values align with the Trust values.

Policy in respect of applications for employment from disabled persons, the treatment of employees who become disabled and the training, career development and promotion of disabled person

The Trust has implemented several detailed policies in relation to all aspects of personnel matters including:

Equal Opportunities Policy
Health and Safety Policy

In accordance with the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy, the Trust has established fair employment practices in the recruitment, selection, retention and training of disabled staff. The Trust ensures that disabled persons have opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

j. Engagement with suppliers, customers and others in a business relationship with the Academy

- In accordance with The Companies (Miscellaneous Reporting) Regulations 2018, the Trustees summarise below how they have had regard for the need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others.

  - Suppliers
    The Trust maintains regular contact with suppliers to update them on strategic changes so that they in turn can support the business need. Orders and payments are processed in a timely manner and where appropriate service level agreements (SLAs) are used to define expectations and help build a stronger, mutually beneficial relationship.

  - Customers
    The Trust maintains regular contact with customers and actively works to ensure payments are processed as quickly as possible.

  - Other stakeholders and the wider community
    The Trust uses various platforms to connect with stakeholders and the wider community; email, newsletters, meetings (online and/or face to face), etc. In 2024-2025 we are planning to hold another governor immersion day for Trustees and Members as this was well received when we did this in 2022-2023. We launched a fortnightly newsletter to communicate with parents, pupils, Trustees and staff.

Objectives and activities

a. Objects and aims

James Marks Academy Trust has entered into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State which specifies amongst other things, the basis for admitting pupils to the Trust and that the curriculum should be broad and balanced.

The main objects / aims of the Trust during the period ended 31 August 2024 are summarised below:
- To offer excellent education as standard to enable every pupil to reach their full potential.
- To work collaboratively and in partnership with other local schools and providers, sharing ideas and strengths.
- To put people first, treating every person within the trust and its academies as individuals.
- To provide value for money for the funds expended.

Objectives and activities (continued)

b. Objectives, strategies and activities

The James Marks Academy Trust is dedicated to delivering an excellent education, so that our pupils are empowered to have high aspirations for their future. We nurture and challenge them to take responsibility, make their own decisions and work collaboratively, so they grow into confident, happy, economically active young adults. This is reflected in our strap line 'Aspirational for those with SEND.'

We value excellent teaching, underpinned by the high-quality professional development and support given by our Senior Management Team through sharing ideas and promoting best practice. We have high expectations of our staff and pupils; we offer bespoke timetables and personalised curriculum that is challenging, flexible and innovative which offer both academic and vocational subjects that meet the needs of our pupils. We believe in achievement in its broadest sense and that enjoyment of learning is crucial to success.

c. Public benefit

In setting our objectives and planning out activities the Trustees have carefully considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. James Marks Academy Trust fully complies with all statutory guidance and seeks to support its wider educational objectives, via a strong community role. Community based projects are undertaken throughout the year by staff and pupils and we are keen to launch our 'Corporate social responsibility' objective which ranges from waste and pollution reduction to employees volunteering in a local charity, school or community centre.

Strategic report

Achievements and performance

a. Key performance indicators

The Trust measures its success partly through a series of performance indicators.

These indicators comprise of:

Examination results (see https://www.romanfields.herts.sch.uk/our-performance)
Below is a table showing outcomes over the last five years. James Marks Academy Trust prides itself on delivering outstanding outcomes for the pupils who attend our provisions. Currently, this pages shows the GCSE outcomes for Roman Fields Academy, as James Marks does not have pupils in KS4. The first KS4 cohort will start formal qualifications in 2025. The outcomes from RFA are both the source and reflection of pride.

Roman Fields 5-year trend - all pupils	2019 - 20	2020 - 21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Attainment 8	24.3	29.1	30.6	36.2	37.7
GCSE A*-C in English and Maths or equivalent	71%	63%	74%	64%	65%
5 GCSEs 9-4 including English and Maths	21%	47%	63%	55%	47%
5 GCSEs 9-4 including English, Maths and Science	21%	42%	63%	55%	47%

Strategic report (continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

Context: We are at a disadvantage in regard to Attainment 8 figures due to the length of time our pupils are with us and the number of subjects they can therefore access, particularly in consideration of the long abstractions from education that they have typically suffered. However, the figures do help us to demonstrate and interrogate the ever-widening breadth of education we attempt to deliver for our pupils, and their attainment therein. This same disadvantage applies to an extent in regard to "5 GCSEs" measures, but the above figures demonstrate the effectiveness of our efforts to make sure the disadvantage does not translate to pupil attainment and outcomes.

Recruitment, retention and promotion of staff
Across the James Marks Academy Trust for 2023-2024 we had a staff retention rate of 90%. Movement within the Trust has been slightly more fluid than in the previous year as we expand the staff structure to include Forest House Education Centre and James Marks Academy. Two staff members left FHEC; one of which had previously been with the RFA for a number of years'. Two staff members left RFA; The Bursar retired and the other went onto teach in a mainstream school. One support staff JMA member left as wanted to pursue a teacher qualification.

Due to the opening of the Free School in September 2023, we promoted one member of staff to Head of Science and one to Assistant Head for the James Marks Academy in the prior academic year. This year we have promoted one member to be RFA Head Teacher and one to Assistant Head from September 2024. We anticipate there will be further opportunities for staff as the Trust grows, which should support staff retention. The reason for this is history tells us that most colleagues who do leave us, do so to pursue a promotion which is something we were unable to offer until the expansion of the Trust.

Staff and pupil attendance
Staff attendance is excellent far beyond that of other Trust; just 44 days of absence were recorded over the entire staff body, of which related to two staff due to injury and compassionate leave respectively. Staff attendance has slightly dropped within the Trust to 93% but we expected a dip given the increasing staff numbers.

Pupil attendance is exceptionally good; when marked against their prior attendance at previous schools/provisions. Almost all pupils register a dramatic improvement in attendance soon after joining. Please note the majority of our cohort arrive with us as school refusers/persistent absence pupils. We are proud of the fact that we are able to re-engage the vast majority with school attendance and their learning. This bucks the trend of many organisations who support a similar cohort, what has led to Roman Fields being classed as (high performing) and used as a case study, following a DfE commissioned study into attendance in alternative provisions.

Onward Transition data
Our colleagues who support pupils with careers and onward transition, work hard to ensure they are ready for the next step in their journey. (https://www.romanfields.herts.sch.uk/careers-and-transition).

Roman Fields successfully meet all the requirements for the Quality in Careers Standard. This standard is the national quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance in schools, colleges and work-based learning.

Financial performance
To ensure sustainability, staff costs as a % of income and expenditure are monitored by Trustees when approving the consolidated annual budget for the following financial year. The academy is required to produce a balanced in-year budget. Trustees are aware that the typical expenditure on staff is around 85% (Key for School Leaders) and aware of the DfE's school benchmarking service for comparison purposes.

Strategic report (continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

	2023-2024
Salary Costs to ESFA & LA Revenue Income	81%
Salary Costs to Total Income	80%
Salary Costs to % Total Expense	77%

The Chief Finance Officer emails the monthly finance reports to the Executive Head, Finance Trustee and Chair of Trustees, so that they can ensure appropriate checks and balances are in place; in addition, the finance reports are also uploaded to the Google Drive for all Trustees and Members to review.

Key Performance Indicators are constantly under review by the Trust Board; trustees are seeking to outline KPIs that are SMART and evolve over time as the Trust grows and priorities change.

b. Going concern

Having considered the latest management information and future forecasts, the Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that James Marks Academy Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, the Trust continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Accounting Policies note of the financial statements.

In making this statement the Board of Trustees have taken into due consideration the recent change in government, the continuing effects of the pandemic and the increase in expenditure, specifically around utilities and staffing.

c. Promoting the success of the company

The Trustees have acted in accordance with their duties under section 172(1) of the Companies Act 2006 which includes their duty to act in the way in which they consider, in good faith, would be most likely to promote the success of the Trust for the benefit of its members and stakeholders, and in doing so have regard (amongst other matters) to:

- **The long term consequences of any decision**
  Trustees consider the consequences of any strategic decision as part of their assessment. We aim to balance our income and expenditure to ensure the Trust remains sustainable in the long term. This is balanced against the needs of our pupils, staff and other stakeholders, and the community, to ensure we are spending the funding in the most effective way to support our aims.

Strategic report (continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

- **The interest of the company's employees**
  From April 2021, Trust employees are able to access 'Wider Wallet' which is a company benefit platform, which the Trust is adding to - last year the Cycle to Work Scheme. The Trust has also invested in two in-house counsellors to support both pupils and staff. A Well-Being Committee has been formed that listens and act on staff feedback, where reasonably practical. Details of how the the Trustees give consideration to the interest of the Trust's employees can be found in the section Engagement with Employees.

- **The need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others**
  Details of how the Trustees give consideration to the interests of other stakeholders can be found in the section Engagement with suppliers, customers and others in a business relationship with the Trust.

- **The impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment**
  Details of how the Trustees give consideration to the impact on the community can be found in the Section Engagement with suppliers, customers and others in a business relationship with the Trust. At the start of the lockdown the Trust considered the community and supplied supermarket vouchers to families normally in receipt of free school meals. The Trust has also worked to ensure that our provision remained fully open to all, throughout the entirety of the lockdown. We also continue to offer activities during traditional school holiday periods, so our pupils, most of whom arrive with us will poor mental health and persistent absence issues remain engaged with us particularly during the long summer.

- **The desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct**
  The Trust aims to conduct all its business with integrity adhering to ethics and social and moral responsibilities. The Trustees adhere to a number of policies that help to ensure high standards of business conduct.

- **The need to act fairly between members of the company**
  All members of the Trust are treated fairly and equally, with the same access to information and the ability to directly contact Trustees. Strategically the Trustees work to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion within the Trust.

Strategic report (continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

d. Achievement and performance

Roman Fields was inspected in June 2024 and was rated 'Outstanding' in all areas.

The report identifies that the school strives to develop pupils to meet their full potential:
- 'This school leaves no stone unturned to significantly improve the life chances of its pupils.'
- 'The school and trust are relentless in their efforts to ensure all pupils succeed academically and socially.'
- 'Teachers are subject experts. The work pupils receive is ambitious. No limit is placed on what pupils can achieve.'
- 'The school ensures strategies to ensure pupils attend well and follow behaviour expectations are consistently in place.'

James Marks Academy Trust provided education for approximately 70 complex pupils in the period ending 31 August 2024 across the three sites; Roman Fields Academy (47 pupils), Forest House Education Centre from September 2022 (an SLA of Roman Fields) and 22 pupils temporarily on the Roman Fields Site for the new free school (James Marks Academy) from September 2023. Numbers for the James Marks Academy are due to grow to 45 pupils in September 2024 once we are on the new site.

Partnership working has been a key strength of the Trust and continues to develop. Senior Leaders, subject leaders and teachers meet regularly to share curriculum planning and best practice.
Achievements within the Trust are supported by the following strengths:
- Strong leadership throughout the organisation with effective support from the Trustees
- Data that shows pupils are making excellent progress;
- The proportion of good or better teaching is high;
- Pupils' behaviour and attitude to work are exemplary;
- Pupil attendance is good;
- Pupils get on well together and feel safe

Value for money has been secured through robust financial monitoring, underpinned by the oversight maintained by the Trustees and Executive Team.

Financial review

Most of the Trusts income is obtained from the Local Authority Commissioned Service High Needs Funding and ESFA (Education Skills Funding Agency) in the form of recurrent grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received from the DfE during the year ended 31 August 2024 and the associated expenditure are shown as Restricted Funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

During the period ending 31 August 2024 the Trust received income total of £12,615,023. The total expenditure was £2,816,422 of which £93,441 relates to depreciation, meaning the underlying expenditure was £2,722,981. These figures at first glance seem incredibly robust. However, whilst the Trust is buoyant, £9,476,636, related to donated fixed assets from the local authority, in relation to the new school and internal fixtures and fittings, called James Marks Academy. A further £120,669 was from the ESFA, in relation to IT equipment, acquired for James Marks Academy.

Due to accounting rules for the Local Government Pension Scheme under FRS102, the Trust had a pension fund surplus of £4,000. As noted in note 23, the balance has not been recognised on the basis that the balance is not deemed recoverable through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan.

Strategic report (continued)

Key financial policies are being reviewed include the Finance Procedures Manual which lays out the framework for financial management, including financial responsibilities of the Board, Executive Head (Accounting Officer) and the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and other Financial Administrators, as well as delegated authority for spending.

a. Reserves policy

The Trustees must ensure that the Trust holds enough reserves to fund future strategic plans and minimise the financial risks around maintenance of working capital, cash flow, capital maintenance and other uncertainties relating to income and expenditure.

The Trustees review the reserves policy of the Trust annually as part of the Budget and Three-Year Plan process, with regard for the utilisation of significant level of reserves. The Trustees have determined it would be appropriate to maintain a level of free reserves due to the rising future cost pressures and agreed that the consolidated minimum level of reserves held for revenue purposes should be no less than three months' salary with on-costs (for illustrative purposes this would be no less than £553,932). The reserve balance should only decrease due to capital investment and/or other organisational needs, which shall at all times be approved by the Finance Committee.

The Trusts balance on restricted (General funds) plus the balance on unrestricted funds at 31 August 2024 was £1,168,847.

b. Investment policy

Trustees are committed to ensuring that all funds under their control are managed in such a way as to maximise return whilst minimising risk. Due to the nature and timing of receipt of funding, the Trust may at times hold cash balances surplus to its short-term requirements. James Marks Academy Trust has one bank account with Lloyds Bank, but has begun the process of opening up a business reserve account to take advantage of higher interest rates through the Insignis platform.

c. Principal risks and uncertainties

The Trustees maintain a risk register, identifying the major risks to which the Trust is exposed and identifying the actions and procedures to mitigate those risks. A formal review of the risk register is undertaken on a termly basis by the Finance Audit and Business Committee. The principle risks facing the Trust are outlined below:

Financial - the Trust has considerable reliance on continued Local Authority and ESFA Government funding. While this level is expected to continue, there is no assurance that Government policy, or practice will remain the same or that public funding will continue at the same level, or on the same terms. Increased employment and premises costs are all contributing to cost pressures, which in turn increases the importance of maintaining robust levels of revenue reserves.

Failures in governance and/or management - the risk in this area arises from potential failure to manage effectively the Trust's finances, estates, internal controls, compliance with regulations and legislation, statutory returns, etc. The Trustees continue to review and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate these risks.

Reputational - the continuing success of the Trust is dependent on continuing to attract applicants in sufficient numbers by maintaining the highest educational standards. To mitigate this risk Trustees, ensure that pupil success and achievement are closely monitored and reviewed.

Safeguarding and child protection - the Trustees continue to ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the areas of selection and monitoring of staff, the operation of child protection policies and procedures, health & safety, and discipline.

Staffing - the success of the Trust is reliant upon the quality of its staff, so the Trustees monitor and review policies and procedures to ensure continued development and training of staff as well as ensuring there is clear succession planning.

Fraud and mismanagement of funds - The Trust has appointed Raymond Kane as Responsible Officer to carry out internal audits on financial systems and records as required by the Financial Trust Handbook. All finance staff receive training to keep them up to date with financial practice requirements and develop their skills in this area.

Premises - The Trustees receive termly feedback and discuss at length the estates and work that is required to ensure that it is safe, well maintained and complies with relevant regulations. The trust applied for a CIF bid in November 2022 and was awarded the grant in May 2023 to renew the pipework throughout the Roman Fields buildings to mitigate the risk of Legionella and ensure that the heating systems work more efficiently and economically. The Trust are looking to place a further CIF bid for an upgrade/overhaul of the fire alarm system in 2024/2025 to again ensure that it is fit for purpose.

We are aware there may be unknown repairs on Roman Fields premises given the age of the buildings and grounds and constantly strive to improve the buildings and facilities, while retaining reserves to support the set up and development of the new site in Welwyn Garden City.

Fundraising

We encourage staff and pupils to fundraise for Charities of their choice. In each Academy the pupil council will be involved through nominating a fundraising activity and charity.

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting (continued)

UK GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND ENERGY USE DATA FOR THE PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER 2023 TO 31 AUGUST 2024				
ENERGY SOURCE	**CONSUMPTION**	**SCOPE**	**EMISSIONS CALCULATION**	**TOTAL**
Energy consumption break down (kWh) Gas - total kWh (kilowatt-hours) used provided by the gas supplier on estimated annual consumption	311314 KWh	1	Multiply by 0.1829 (2024 fuels, natural gas conversion factor gross CV to kg CO2e)	56,939 kgCO2e = 56.94 tCO2e
Energy consumption break down (kWh) Electricity – total kWh (kilowatt-hours) used provided by the gas supplier on estimated annual consumption	115274 KWh	2	Multiply by 0.20705 (2024 UK electricity conversion factor to kgCO2e)	23,867 kgCO2e = 23.87 tCO2e
Transport - Trust owned vehicles School Vehicle 1 (Nissan) – 2214 miles in the year School Vehicle 2 (Ford) – 1600 miles in the year	3814 miles x 1.19832 (2024 SECR kWh pass & delivery vehs, vans class 2) = 4570 KWh	1	3814 miles x 0.30309 (2024 managed assets vehicles, vans class 2 – used in lieu of passenger vehicles conversion)	1156 kgCO2e = 1.16 tCO2e
Transport – Total mileage for petrol reimbursed from staff claims = 9696.2 miles	9696.2 miles x 1.14204 (2024 SECR kWh pass & delivery vehs, average car conversion factor to kWh, petrol) =11073.45 kWh	3	9696.2 miles x 0.26473 (2024 business travel and average car conversion factor to kgCO2e, petrol)	2566.88 kgCO2e = 2.57 tCO2e
Total	440,098 KWh			84.54 tCO2e

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting (continued)

STREAMLINED ENERGY AND CARBON REPORTING FOR TWO PRIOR YEARS FOR COMPARISON

UK GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND ENERGY USE DATA FOR THE PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 TO 31 AUGUST 2023				
ENERGY SOURCE	CONSUMPTION	SCOPE	EMISSIONS CALCULATION	TOTAL
Energy consumption break down (kWh) Gas - total kWh (kilowatt-hours) used provided by the gas supplier on estimated annual consumption	421855 KWh	1	Multiply by 0.18256 (2023 fuels, natural gas conversion factor gross CV to kg CO2e)	77,013 kgCO2e = 77.01 tCO2e
Energy consumption break down (kWh) Electricity – total kWh (kilowatt-hours) used provided by the gas supplier on estimated annual consumption	49056 KWh	2	Multiply by 0.207074 (2023 UK electricity conversion factor to kgCO2e)	10,158 kgCO2e = 10.16 tCO2e
Transport - Trust owned vehicles School Vehicle 1 (Nissan) – 2214 miles in the year School Vehicle 2 (Ford) – 1600 miles in the year	3814 miles x 1.106441 (2023 SECR kWh pass & delivery vehs, vans class 2) = 4219 KWh	1	3814 miles x 0.27745 (2023 managed assets vehicles, vans class 2 – used in lieu of passenger vehicles conversion)	1058 kgCO2e = 1.58 tCO2e
Transport – Total mileage for petrol reimbursed from staff claims = 8887.75 miles	8887.75 miles x 1.1303 (2023 SECR kWh pass & delivery vehs, average car conversion factor to kWh, petrol) =10045.82 kWh	3	8887.75 miles x 0.2627 (2023 business travel and average car conversion factor to kgCO2e, petrol)	2334 kgCO2e = 2.33 tCO2e
Total	483,940 KWh			91.08 tCO2e

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting (continued)

UK GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND ENERGY USE DATA FOR THE PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER 2021 TO 31 AUGUST 2022				
ENERGY SOURCE	**CONSUMPTION**	**SCOPE**	**EMISSIONS CALCULATION**	**TOTAL**
Energy consumption break down (kWh) Gas - total kWh (kilowatt-hours) used provided by the gas supplier on estimated annual consumption	387852 KWh	1	Multiply by 0.18254 (2022 fuels, natural gas conversion factor gross CV to kg CO2e)	70,798 kgCO2e = 70.79 tCO2e
Energy consumption break down (kWh) Electricity – total kWh (kilowatt-hours) used provided by the gas supplier on estimated annual consumption	96088 KWh	2	Multiply by 0.19338 (2022 UK electricity conversion factor to kgCO2e)	18,581 kgCO2e = 18.58 tCO2e
Transport - Trust owned vehicles School Vehicle 1 (Nissan) – 539 miles in the year School Vehicle 2 (Ford) – 209 miles in the year	748 miles x 1.17682 (2022 SECR kWh pass & delivery vehs, vans class 2) = 880 KWh	1	748 miles = 880 km 880 km x 0.28186 (2022 managed assets vehicles, vans class 2 – used in lieu of passenger vehicles conversion)	248 kgCO2e = 0.25 tCO2e
Transport – Total mileage for petrol reimbursed from staff claims = 2791.4 miles	2791.4 miles x 1.14779 (2022 SECR kWh pass & delivery vehs, average car conversion factor to kWh, petrol) =3203.9 kWh	3	2791.4 miles x 0.28053 (2022 business travel and average car conversion factor to kgCO2e, petrol)	783 kgCO2e = 0.78 tCO2e
Total	488,023 KWh			90.4 tCO2e

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting (continued)

Qualification and Reporting Methodology
We have followed the 2019 HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol – Corporate Standard and have used the 2020 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

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

Measures taken to improve energy efficiency

Roman Fields
At Roman Fields we have changed lights across the site to LED and upgraded corridors to include lights that work on sensors.

Prior to becoming an academy Roman Fields installed new boilers. These boilers enable all the radiators to be switched off between the hours of 4pm and 6am and over the weekends.

Using a CIF bid we upgraded pipework throughout the school to reduce the amount of water leaks and make the heating more efficient.

We have centralised printers and removed individual printers, where possible, from rooms.

We have upgraded all our IT technology across the sites and moved to a cloud based system removing the need to have large servers onsite.

The teaching cabins are being refurbished, which is entirely necessary after 25 years, rather than replaced, when this work is complete they should last for another 30 years and look like new with new cladding, windows and doors.

We have installed Solar Panels for the site to be more energy efficient.

Forest House
We have centralised printers and removed individual printers, where possible, from rooms.

We have upgraded all our IT technology across the sites and moved to a cloud based system removing the need to have large servers onsite.

James Marks Academy
We have had Solar panels put on this site to ensure the site is more energy efficient.

We have electric vehicle points in the car park to encourage the use of electric vehicles.

As with the other sites we have installed centralised printers.

We have gone cloud based removing the need to have large servers onsite.

Plans for future periods

The Trust was joined by a new Special Free School in September 2023 which opened on the Roman Fields Academy site for one academic year and in September 2024 moved to the new purpose built site in Welwyn Garden City. Roman Fields Academy predominately accommodates KS4 & 5 pupils (although we are registered for pupils from year 6) because demand for places is such that these are often taken by older pupils. The new free school will provide additional capacity across the Trust and enable us to take pupils into year 7, 8 and 9. The new free school is being designed and built to support a cohort for whom a traditional SEMH school would not be deemed appropriate, those with significant mental health concerns and high anxiety. Forest House, which was new to the Trust in September 2022, is expected to change little, if at all, as we seek to build upon its first successful year of operation.

Funds held as custodian on behalf of others

The Trust and its Trustees do not act as the Custodian Trustees of any other Charity.

Disclosure of information to auditors

Insofar as the Trustees are aware:

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

The Trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on 18 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



E B Billeter
Chair of Trustees

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of responsibility

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

As Trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook and competency framework for governance.

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Executive Head, as accounting officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between James Marks Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' report and in the statement of trustees' responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has formally met 4 times, 5 including the AGM during the 12-month period September 2023 to August 2024.

Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
E B Billeter, Chair	5	5
M P L Braley, Trustee	2	5
A J Clarke, Trustee	4	5
N J Pringle, Vice Chair	4	5
T N Orchard, Executive Head	5	5
E F Yebkal, Trustee	0	5
G A Cunningham, Trustee (resigned 4 March 2024)	3	4

During the year the Board of Trustees undertook a skills audit and identified areas for future Trustee recruitment, namely individuals with SEN, Education, Legal and Marketing skills.

The Finance (Audit) and Business Committee
The Finance (Audit) and Business Committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees and is responsible for exercising the powers and duties of the MAT Board in respect of matters relating to the finances, staff, the maintenance of estates and general resources of the Trust, with the exception of those items specifically reserved for the MAT Board and those delegated to the Executive Head and other staff.

The purpose of the Finance (Audit) and Business Committee is to assist the Executive Head when it comes to decision making. With appropriate challenge and support, this enables detailed consideration to be given to the best means of fulfilling the MAT Board's responsibility. This ensures sound management of the Trust's finances, staff, the maintenance of estates and resources, including proper planning, monitoring and probity. The committee will then make appropriate comments and recommendations on such matters to the MAT Board on a regular basis.

Governance (continued)

The Finance (Audit) and Business Committee shall report on decisions taken under delegated powers to the next meeting of the MAT Board (predominantly through the receipt of the Minutes of the Committee meetings, which shall be a standing agenda item for meetings of the MAT Board). If a major concern is raised by the Committee, its Chair will consult with the Chair of the MAT Board on whether a special meeting of the MAT Board should be convened.

The Finance (Audit) and Business Committee is authorised by the MAT Board to obtain outside legal, or other independent professional advice. The Committee is authorised by the MAT Board to request the attendance of individuals and authorities from outside the MAT with relevant experience and expertise, if it considers this necessary, or expedient, to carry out its functions.

During the year the Executive Head, Chair of Trustees and Finance Link, all of whom are members of the Finance (Audit) and Business Committee have received financial reports from the CFO via email each month and will challenge the information provided to ensure the end of year accounts are accurate and can be consolidated.

The Finance Audit and Business Committee had four meetings during this period and attendance is as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
M Braley, Trustee	2	4
A Clarke, Trustee	3	4
N Pringle, Chair of Committee	4	4
T Orchard, Executive Head	4	4
E Billeter, Chair	2	4

The Standards and GDPR Committee
The Standards and GDPR Committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees and it is responsible for exercising powers and duties in relation to educational policies and standards and overseeing the implementation and success of GDPR across the Trust.

The purpose of the Committee is to scrutinise educational policies and standards at Trust level, and review risks to progress and provide appropriate challenge and support to schools in terms of Key Performance Indicators.

The Standards and GDPR Committee will report directly to the MAT Board through information provided via the Minutes and/or an oral or written report from the Chair of the Committee.

The specific objectives of the Committee are:

- To set and monitor standards and to hold the Executive Leader to account for these;
- To provide scrutiny of policies that apply across all the Schools in the Trust and to review these in line with an agreed schedule;
- To consider the risks which may affect achievement and actions taken to minimise the risk;
- To monitor the performance of governance in each School through Governor hub initially and through an annual review process thereafter;
- To recommend further policy development in relation to governance.

Governance (continued)

The Standards and GDPR Committee had two meetings during this period and attendance is as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
M Braley, Chair of committee	1	2
N Pringle, Trustee	2	2
T Orchard, Executive Head	2	2
E Yebkal, Trustee	0	2
G A Cummingham, Trustee	1	2

Review of value for money

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

The Accounting Officer considers how James Marks Academy Trust resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the Board of Trustees where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data where appropriate. The Accounting Officer for James Marks Academy Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- Securing the best possible education for all pupils, in the most efficient and effective way, at a reasonable cost;
- Ensuring effective use of all resources in the trust's charge;
- Sharing expertise, experience, data and cost effective practices throughout the trust;
- Having procedures in place for obtaining goods and services which provide 'best value' in terms of suitability, efficiency, time and cost. The schedule of financial delegation ensures competitive tendering and consideration is given to the suitability and quality of workmanship when comparing quotations.

The purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk at a reasonable level, rather than to eliminate all risk of failure, to achieve its aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of James Marks Academy Trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in James Marks Academy Trust for the period 01 April 2021 to 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to handle risk

The Accounting Officer, Chair of Trustees, Finance Link Trustee and CFO has reviewed the key risks to which the academy trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks.

The Board of Trustees is of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period ended 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process will be regularly reviewed by the board of trustees.

The risk and control framework

James Marks Academy Trust system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures, including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular, it includes:

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

The Board of Trustees has decided to buy-in an internal audit service from R.M.K Audit Services Limited

The Board of Trustees has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and has decided to appoint Raymond Kane as internal auditor. The internal auditor's role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the Academy Trust's financial systems on a rolling programme. In 2023-2024 there were no internal financial audits carried out due to the high recruitment drive, time required to set up of the new provision, changes in staffing within the central team due to extenuating circumstances, in addition to the day to day tasks. The trust however will conduct 4 internal audits within 2024-2025 of which at least two will be financial. A new member of staff has been appointed in the Central Team to support the growing workload and replace the Bursar who retired during this academic year.

Non-Financial Audits

The Trust has again taken a wider view this year than just focusing on finance for the period of September 2023 - August 2024 and paid Herts for Learning to conduct an external review of governance to provide objective expert feedback of our governance practices and their effectiveness, this is in line with the DfE recommendation that MATs undertake an ERG every three years.

Other external feedback received was the audit of the Single Central Record in March 2024, The Autism Accreditation Specialist Award in January 2024 and Roman Fields Academy went through an Ofsted visit in June 2024 for which they were graded outstanding.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Review of effectiveness

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

- expert external reviews of different areas accross the trust;
- the work of the Executive Team within James Marks Academy Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.
- the work of the external auditors;

The accounting officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the Finance (Audit) and Buisness committee. A plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Conclusion

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

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

.....
Eugene Billeter
Chair of Trustees
Date: 18 December 2024

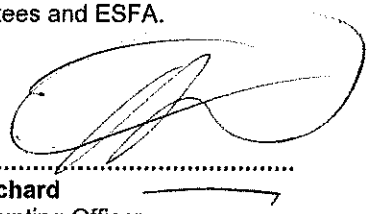
.....
Trevor Orchard
Accounting Officer

STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

As accounting officer of James Marks Academy Trust I have considered my responsibility to notify the Academy 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, under the funding agreement in place between the Academy and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023.

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

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



.....

T Orchard
Accounting Officer
Date: 18 December 2024

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

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

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

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

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

Eugene Billeter

E B Billeter
Chair of Trustees
Date: 18 December 2024

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF JAMES MARKS ACADEMY TRUST

Opinion

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

In our opinion the financial statements:

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

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF JAMES MARKS ACADEMY TRUST (CONTINUED)

Other information

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of trustees

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

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the Academy's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the Academy or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the academy through discussions with management, and from our knowledge and experience of the sector in which it operates;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the academy, including relevant DfE and ESFA guidance, the Companies Act 2006, taxation legislation, data protection, anti-bribery, employment, environmental and health and safety legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and inspecting legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the company's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates set out in Note 2 were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance; and
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims.

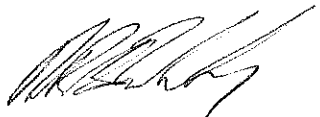
There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the governors and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

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

Use of our report

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



Alan Endersby, ACA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of
Streets Audit LLP
Chartered accountants & statutory auditors
Potton House, Wyboston Lakes
Great North Road
Bedford
MK44 3BZ

18 December 2024

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

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 21 October 2021 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by James Marks Academy Trust during the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Respective responsibilities of James Marks Academy Trust's accounting officer and the reporting accountant

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of James Marks Academy Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 22 March 2021 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2023, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

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

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

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

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

The work undertaken to draw our conclusions included:

- Review of the Academy's systems and controls to ensure effective design;
- Confirmation of satisfactory operation of controls during the year, including authorisation of invoices,
- payments and salary adjustments;
- Review of a sample of expenses focussing on those nominal codes considered to include transactions of a greater risk;
- Review of the reports undertaken by third parties in the year;
- Discussions with the finance team.

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

Conclusion

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

Streets Audit LLP

Reporting Accountant
Streets Audit LLP

Chartered accountants & statutory auditors
Potton House, Wyboston Lakes
Great North Road
Bedford
MK44 3BZ

Date: 18 December 2024

JAMES MARKS ACADEMY TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants:	3					
Other donations and capital grants		**1,822**	**-**	**9,603,279**	**9,605,101**	*409,905*
Other trading activities	5	**1,389**	**-**	**-**	**1,389**	*1,637*
Investments	6	**163**	**-**	**-**	**163**	*111*
Charitable activities		**-**	**3,008,370**	**-**	**3,008,370**	*2,498,092*
Total income		**3,374**	**3,008,370**	**9,603,279**	**12,615,023**	*2,909,745*
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	8	**-**	**2,722,981**	**93,441**	**2,816,422**	*2,134,873*
Total expenditure		**-**	**2,722,981**	**93,441**	**2,816,422**	*2,134,873*
Net income		**3,374**	**285,389**	**9,509,838**	**9,798,601**	*774,872*
Transfers between funds	16	**(96,420)**	**-**	**96,420**	**-**	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		**(93,046)**	**285,389**	**9,606,258**	**9,798,601**	*774,872*
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	23	**-**	**35,000**	**-**	**35,000**	*93,000*
Defined benefit pension scheme asset not recognised		**-**	**(4,000)**	**-**	**(4,000)**	-
Net movement in funds		**(93,046)**	**316,389**	**9,606,258**	**9,829,601**	*867,872*

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		**332,918**	**612,586**	**4,282,310**	**5,227,814**	*4,359,942*
Net movement in funds		**(93,046)**	**316,389**	**9,606,258**	**9,829,601**	*867,872*
Total funds carried forward		**239,872**	**928,975**	**13,888,568**	**15,057,415**	*5,227,814*

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

The notes on pages 42 to 65 form part of these financial statements.

JAMES MARKS ACADEMY TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 12058586

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	13		**13,821,686**		*3,738,644*
			13,821,686		*3,738,644*
Current assets					
Debtors	14	**420,758**		*455,546*	
Cash at bank and in hand		**1,365,471**		*1,173,344*	
		1,786,229		*1,628,890*	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	**(550,500)**		*(97,720)*	
Net current assets			**1,235,729**		*1,531,170*
Total assets less current liabilities			**15,057,415**		*5,269,814*
Net assets excluding pension asset / liability			**15,057,415**		*5,269,814*
Defined benefit pension scheme asset / liability	23		-		*(42,000)*
Total net assets			**15,057,415**		*5,227,814*

BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
Funds of the Academy					
Restricted funds:					
Fixed asset funds	16	13,888,568		4,282,310	
Restricted income funds	16	928,975		654,586	
Restricted funds excluding pension asset	16	14,817,543		4,936,896	
Pension reserve	16	-		(42,000)	
Total restricted funds	16		14,817,543		4,894,896
Unrestricted income funds	16		239,872		332,918
Total funds			15,057,415		5,227,814

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to entities subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements on pages 37 to 65 were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and are signed on their behalf, by:

E B Billeter
Chair of Trustees
Date: 18 December 2024

The notes on pages 42 to 65 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	2024 £	*2023 £*
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	18	**638,525**	*10,587*
Cash flows from investing activities	19	**(446,398)**	*334,941*
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		**192,127**	*345,528*
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		**1,173,344**	*827,816*
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	20, 21	**1,365,471**	*1,173,344*

The notes on pages 42 to 65 form part of these financial statements

1. Accounting policies

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

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements of the Academy, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared under the historic cost convention in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

1.2 Going concern

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

1.3 Income

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

- **Grants**

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

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

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

- **Donations**

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.3 Income (continued)

- **Other income**
  Other income, including the hire of facilities, is recognised in the year it is receivable and to the extent the Academy has provided the goods or services.

1.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

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

  All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

1.5 Interest receivable

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

Donated assets (including assets transferred on conversion) are recognised at fair value on the date the the assets are donated.

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

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

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Long-term leasehold property	-		over the terms of the lease on a straight line basis
Leasehold property improvements	-		
Furniture and equipment	-	14%	per annum on a straight line basis
Computer equipment	-	33%	per annum on a straight line basis
Motor vehicles	-	20%	per annum on a straight line basis

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

1.7 Debtors

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

1.8 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1. **Accounting policies (continued)**

1.9 Liabilities

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

1.10 Operating leases

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

1.11 Pensions

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

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

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

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.12 Fund accounting

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

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

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

Investment income, gains and losses are allocated to the appropriate fund.

2. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The Academy 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 or income for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 23, 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 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2024. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

The annual depreciation charge for each class of tangible fixed asset is based on an estimate of the useful economic life of the respective assets. This is reviewed periodically by the Trustees to ensure that they reflect both external and internal factors.

3. Income from donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Donations	1,822	-	**1,822**	*3,238*
Capital Grants	-	126,643	**126,643**	*406,667*
Donated assets from local authority	-	9,476,636	**9,476,636**	*-*
Total 2024	1,822	9,603,279	**9,605,101**	*409,905*

4. Funding for the Academy's educational operations

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Educational activities			
DfE/ESFA grants			
General Annual Grant (GAG)	695,000	**695,000**	*400,000*
Other DfE/ESFA grants			
Pupil Premium	41,636	**41,636**	*24,242*
Project Development Grants	-	**-**	*190,000*
Other DfE / ESFA Grants	949	**949**	*2,938*
	737,585	**737,585**	*617,180*
Other Government grants			
Local Authority Grants	2,215,300	**2,215,300**	*1,834,927*
	2,215,300	**2,215,300**	*1,834,927*
Other income	55,485	**55,485**	*45,985*
Total 2024	3,008,370	**3,008,370**	*2,498,092*

5. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Hire of Facilities	1,389	**1,389**	*1,389*
Catering	-	**-**	*98*
Sale of Goods	-	**-**	*150*
Total 2024	1,389	**1,389**	*1,637*

6. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Interest Received	163	**163**	*111*

7. Expenditure

	Staff Costs 2024 £	Premises 2024 £	Other 2024 £	Total 2024 £	*Total 2023 £*
Academy's Educational Operations:					
Direct costs	1,803,902	-	101,666	**1,905,568**	*1,524,947*
Allocated support costs	331,538	78,111	501,205	**910,854**	*609,926*
Total 2024	2,135,440	78,111	602,871	**2,816,422**	*2,134,873*
Total 2023	*1,753,329*	*74,340*	*307,204*	*2,134,873*	

8. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2024 £	Support costs 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Academy's Educational Operations:	1,905,568	910,854	**2,816,422**	*2,134,873*
Total 2023	*1,524,947*	*609,926*	*2,134,873*	

Analysis of direct costs

	Activities 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Staff costs	1,803,902	**1,803,902**	*1,460,898*
Educational supplies	71,931	**71,931**	*37,966*
Staff development	11,942	**11,942**	*9,141*
Educational consultancy	17,793	**17,793**	*16,942*
Total 2024	1,905,568	**1,905,568**	*1,524,947*

8. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

Analysis of support costs

	Activities 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Pension finance costs	2,000	**2,000**	*5,000*
Staff costs	331,538	**331,538**	*292,431*
Depreciation	93,441	**93,441**	*47,781*
Educational consultancy	340	**340**	*-*
Maintenance of premises and equipment	249,207	**249,207**	*74,930*
Cleaning	43,469	**43,469**	*34,059*
Rent and rates	585	**585**	*12,329*
Heat and light	77,526	**77,526**	*33,097*
Insurance	2,562	**2,562**	*7,676*
Catering	1,918	**1,918**	*-*
Other support costs	44,299	**44,299**	*36,413*
ICT Costs	28,609	**28,609**	*25,958*
Catering	7,905	**7,905**	*2,808*
Consultancy	1,875	**1,875**	*630*
CIF boiler replacement works	(9,129)	**(9,129)**	*9,129*
Governance costs	34,709	**34,709**	*27,685*
Total 2024	910,854	**910,854**	*609,926*

9. Net income

Net income for the year includes:

	2024 £	*2023 £*
Operating lease rentals	**5,334**	*3,455*
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	**93,441**	*47,781*
Fees paid to auditors for:		
- audit	**12,000**	*10,000*
- other services	**2,950**	*2,850*

10. Staff

a. Staff costs and employee benefits

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	**1,617,979**	*1,321,724*
Social security costs	**165,228**	*129,798*
Pension costs	**352,233**	*301,807*
	2,135,440	*1,753,329*

b. Staff numbers

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

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Management	**6**	*6*
Teachers	**13**	*13*
Education Support	**16**	*14*
Admin	**9**	*7*
Premises	**3**	*2*
	47	*42*

10. Staff (continued)

c. Higher paid staff

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

	2024 No.	*2023* *No.*
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	**2**	-
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	**3**	*1*
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	**-**	*1*
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	**1**	-

d. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Academy comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy was £643,715 *(2023 - £450,134)*.

11. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

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

		2024 £	*2023* *£*
T Orchard, Executive Head	Remuneration	**115,000 - 120,000**	*90,000 - 95,000*
	Pension contributions paid	**25,000 - 30,000**	*20,000 - 25,000*

During the year ended 31 August 2024, no Trustee expenses have been incurred *(2023 - £NIL)*.

12. Trustees' and Officers' insurance

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

13. Tangible fixed assets

	Long-term leasehold property £	Leasehold property improvements £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Motor vehicles £	Total £
Cost or valuation						
At 1 September 2023	**3,700,000**	**-**	**10,027**	**79,897**	**53,181**	**3,843,105**
Additions	**9,225,569**	**513,690**	**233,197**	**167,836**	**36,191**	**10,176,483**
At 31 August 2024	**12,925,569**	**513,690**	**243,224**	**247,733**	**89,372**	**14,019,588**
Depreciation						
At 1 September 2023	**71,533**	**-**	**1,955**	**12,390**	**18,583**	**104,461**
Charge for the year	**48,051**	**-**	**1,504**	**32,646**	**11,240**	**93,441**
At 31 August 2024	**119,584**	**-**	**3,459**	**45,036**	**29,823**	**197,902**
Net book value						
At 31 August 2024	**12,805,985**	**513,690**	**239,765**	**202,697**	**59,549**	**13,821,686**
At 31 August 2023	*3,628,467*	*-*	*8,072*	*67,507*	*34,598*	*3,738,644*

14. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Due within one year		
Other debtors	**222,676**	*50,430*
Prepayments and accrued income	**198,082**	*405,116*
	420,758	*455,546*

15. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	**29,726**	*1,013*
Other taxation and social security	**82,416**	*62,404*
Accruals	**438,358**	*34,303*
	550,500	*97,720*

16. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2023	Income	Expenditure	Transfers in/out	Gains/ (Losses)	Balance at 31 August 2024
Unrestricted funds						
General Funds	**332,918**	**3,374**	**-**	**(96,420)**	**-**	**239,872**
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	**-**	**695,000**	**(695,000)**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Pupil Premium	**-**	**41,636**	**(41,636)**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Other DfE/ESFA Grants	**-**	**949**	**(949)**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Local Authority Grants	**489,909**	**2,215,300**	**(1,776,234)**	**-**	**-**	**928,975**
Other Income	**-**	**55,485**	**(55,485)**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Project Development Grant for new free school	**164,677**	**-**	**(164,677)**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Pension reserve	**(42,000)**	**-**	**11,000**	**-**	**31,000**	**-**
	612,586	**3,008,370**	**(2,722,981)**	**-**	**31,000**	**928,975**

16. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2024 £
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Tangible fixed assets	3,738,644	-	(93,441)	10,176,483	-	13,821,686
Devolved formula capital	-	5,974	-	(5,974)	-	-
CIF - Legislation compliance boiler	543,666	-	-	(476,784)	-	66,882
Donated fixed assets from local authority	-	9,476,636	-	(9,476,636)	-	-
ESFA IT grant for James Marks Academy	-	120,669	-	(120,669)	-	-
	4,282,310	9,603,279	(93,441)	96,420	-	13,888,568
Total Restricted funds	4,894,896	12,611,649	(2,816,422)	96,420	31,000	14,817,543
Total funds	5,227,814	12,615,023	(2,816,422)	-	31,000	15,057,415

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

General Funds:
The Academy's general funds represent income and expenditure relating to activities undertaken by the Academy as part of its charitable activities. The Academy can then use these funds for any purpose.

Restricted Funds:
The Academy received a number of grants during the year for the purpose of providing educational services to its pupils. These funds included grants from the ESFA for the General Annual Grant (GAG) and Pupil Premium. Special Educational Needs (High Needs) grants were also received from the Local Authority. These grants have been used for staff costs, educational resources and general costs incurred in the running of the Academy. The unspent funds have been carried forward to future accounting periods.

16. Statement of funds (continued)

Restricted Fixed Asset Funds:
The Academy received Devolved Formula Capital funding to be spent on capital repairs and the purchase of new equipment. Assets which are capitalised in the accounts are represented by a separate fund within the Restricted Fixed Asset fund.

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

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

	Balance at 1 September 2022		*Expenditure*	*Transfers in/out*	*Gains/ (Losses)*	*Balance at 31 August 2023*
Unrestricted funds						
General Funds	*493,825*	*4,986*	-	*(165,893)*	-	*332,918*
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	*245,302*	*400,000*	*(615,302)*	*(30,000)*	-	-
Pupil Premium	-	*24,242*	*(24,242)*	-	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA Grants	-	*2,938*	*(2,938)*	-	-	-
Local Authority Grants	-	*1,834,927*	*(1,305,173)*	*(39,845)*	-	*489,909*
Project Development Grant for new free school	-	*190,000*	*(55,323)*	*30,000*	-	*164,677*
FHC income received from other schools	-	*45,985*	*(45,985)*	-	-	-
Pension reserve	*(106,000)*	-	*(29,000)*	-	*93,000*	*(42,000)*
	139,302	*2,498,092*	*(2,077,963)*	*(39,845)*	*93,000*	*612,586*

16. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2022		*Expenditure*	*Transfers in/out*	*Gains/ (Losses)*	*Balance at 31 August 2023*
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Tangible fixed assets	*3,714,588*	-	*(47,781)*	*71,837*	-	*3,738,644*
Devolved formula capital	*12,227*	*19,765*	-	*(31,992)*	-	-
CIF - Legislation compliance boiler	-	*386,902*	*(9,129)*	*165,893*	-	*543,666*
	3,726,815	*406,667*	*(56,910)*	*205,738*	-	*4,282,310*
Total Restricted funds	*3,866,117*	*2,904,759*	*(2,134,873)*	*165,893*	*93,000*	*4,894,896*
Total funds	*4,359,942*	*2,909,745*	*(2,134,873)*	-	*93,000*	*5,227,814*

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were allocated as follows:

	2024 £	*2023* £
Roman Fields Academy	**830,757**	*908,262*
Forest House Education Centre	**84,627**	*79,242*
James Marks Academy	**253,463**	-
Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve	**1,168,847**	*987,504*
Restricted fixed asset fund	**13,888,568**	*4,282,310*
Pension reserve	**-**	*(42,000)*
Total	**15,057,415**	*5,227,814*

Total cost analysis by academy

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

16. Statement of funds (continued)

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation £	Total 2024 £	*Total 2023 £*
Roman Fields Academy	1,206,688	135,412	31,861	432,348	**1,806,309**	*1,791,348*
Forest House Education Centre	263,129	62,967	5,951	10,727	**342,774**	*295,744*
James Marks Academy	335,257	144,987	34,119	59,535	**573,898**	-
Academy	1,805,074	343,366	71,931	502,610	**2,722,981**	*2,087,092*

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current period

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	13,821,686	**13,821,686**
Current assets	239,872	1,479,475	66,882	**1,786,229**
Creditors due within one year	-	(550,500)	-	**(550,500)**
Total	239,872	928,975	13,888,568	**15,057,415**

17. Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior period

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	*Restricted funds 2023 £*	*Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £*	*Total funds 2023 £*
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	*3,738,644*	*3,738,644*
Current assets	*332,918*	*752,306*	*543,666*	*1,628,890*
Creditors due within one year	-	*(97,720)*	-	*(97,720)*
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	*(42,000)*	-	*(42,000)*
Total	*332,918*	*612,586*	*4,282,310*	*5,227,814*

18. Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £	*2023 £*
Net income for the period (as per statement of financial activities)	**9,798,601**	*774,872*
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	**93,441**	*47,781*
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	**(126,643)**	*(406,667)*
Interest receivable	**(163)**	*(111)*
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	**(13,000)**	*24,000*
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost	**2,000**	*5,000*
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	**34,788**	*(418,374)*
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	**452,780**	*(15,914)*
Non-cash donation of fixed asset	**(9,603,279)**	-
Net cash provided by operating activities	**638,525**	*10,587*

19. Cash flows from investing activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	163	111
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(573,204)	(71,837)
Capital grants from DfE Group and other capital grants	126,643	406,667
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities	(446,398)	334,941

20. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash in hand and at bank	1,365,471	1,173,344
Total cash and cash equivalents	1,365,471	1,173,344

21. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 September 2023 £	Cash flows £	At 31 August 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,173,344	192,127	1,365,471
	1,173,344	192,127	1,365,471

22. Capital commitments

	2024 £	2023 £
Contracted for but not provided in these financial statements		
Acquisition of tangible fixed assets	-	34,516

23. Pension commitments

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

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

There were no outstanding or prepaid contributions at either the beginning or the end of the financial year.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 27 October 2023, with the SCAPE rate, set by HMT, applying a notional investment return based on 1.7% above the rate of CPI. The key elements of the valuation outcome are:

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

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

23. Pension commitments (continued)

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £228,322 *(2023 - £164,229)*.

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

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The Academy trust is unable to identify its share opf the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan. Accordingly, the academy trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Academy has set out above the information available on the scheme.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £177,000 *(2023 - £148,000)*, of which employer's contributions totalled £137,000 *(2023 - £115,000)* and employees' contributions totalled £40,000 *(2023 - £33,000)*. The agreed contribution rates for future years are 22.65 per cent for employers and varying per cent for employees.

As described in note 1.11 the LGPS obligation relates to the employees of the Academy, who were the employees transferred as part of the conversion from the maintained school and new employees who were eligible to, and did, join the Scheme in the year. The obligation in respect of employees who transferred on conversion represents their cumulative service at both the predecessor school and the Academy at the reporting date.

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

Principal actuarial assumptions

	2024	*2023*
	%	*%*
Rate of increase in salaries	**3.15**	*3.45*
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	**2.65**	*2.95*
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	**5.00**	*5.20*

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

23. Pension commitments (continued)

	2024 Years	*2023 Years*
Retiring today		
Males	**21.5**	*21.6*
Females	**24.3**	*24.3*
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	**22.0**	*22.1*
Females	**25.9**	*26.0*

Sensitivity analysis

	2024 £000	*2023 £000*
Discount rate -0.1%	**30**	*25*
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	**46**	*37*
CPI rate +0.1%	**30**	*23*

Share of scheme assets

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

	At 31 August 2024 £	*At 31 August 2023 £*
Equities	**664,000**	*450,000*
Corporate bonds	**309,000**	*212,000*
Property	**137,000**	*124,000*
Cash and other liquid assets	**34,000**	*97,000*
Total market value of assets	**1,144,000**	*883,000*

The actual return on scheme assets was £88,000 *(2023 - £40,000 loss)*.

23. Pension commitments (continued)

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Current service cost	**(124,000)**	*(139,000)*
Interest income	**50,000**	*36,000*
Interest cost	**(52,000)**	*(41,000)*
Total amount recognised in the Statement of financial activities	**(126,000)**	*(144,000)*

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	**925,000**	*882,000*
Current service cost	**124,000**	*139,000*
Interest cost	**52,000**	*41,000*
Employee contributions	**40,000**	*33,000*
Actuarial losses/(gains)	**3,000**	*(169,000)*
Benefits paid	**(4,000)**	*(1,000)*
At 31 August	**1,140,000**	*925,000*

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	**883,000**	*776,000*
Interest income	**50,000**	*36,000*
Actuarial gains/(losses)	**38,000**	*(76,000)*
Employer contributions	**137,000**	*115,000*
Employee contributions	**40,000**	*33,000*
Benefits paid	**(4,000)**	*(1,000)*
At 31 August	**1,144,000**	*883,000*

The actuarial report valued a pension scheme surplus of £4,000 as set out in the disclosures above. The balance has not been recognised on the basis that the balance is not deemed recoverable through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan.

24. Operating lease commitments

At 31 August 2024 the Academy had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2024 £	*2023* *£*
Not later than 1 year	**5,209**	*869*
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	**9,115**	-
	14,324	*869*

25. 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.

26. Related party transactions

No related party transactions took place in the period of account, other than certain trustees' remuneration and expenses already disclosed in note 11.