

Company registration number 08087508 (England and Wales)

# **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

**(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**



**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

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ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

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Members

Ms R Foxton  
Ms S Darbyshire  
Mr E Simpson

Directors

Mr M J Hamblett (Accounting Officer)  
Mrs R L Foxton (Chair)  
Mr R Knaggs  
Mr S Farndon  
Mr S J Bradshaw (Appointed 1 September 2024)

Senior management team

- Chief Executive Officer	Mr M Hamblett
- Chief Financial Officer	Mrs K Salisbury
- Chief Operating Officer	Mrs N Lea

Company secretary

Mrs K Salisbury

Company registration number

08087508 (England and Wales)

Registered office

Waterloo Road  
Blackpool  
FY4 3AG

Academies operated

Waterloo Primary Academy

Location

Blackpool

Headteacher

Mrs J Brown

Independent auditor

MHA  
Richard House  
9 Winckley Square  
Preston  
PR1 3HP

Solicitors

Forbes Solicitors  
Ribchester House  
Lancaster Road  
Preston  
PR1 2QL

## **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT**

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

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

As of the 31st August 2025, Waterloo Primary Academy remains as the only academy within the trust. The academy trust operates an academy for pupils aged 3 to 11 serving a deprived catchment area in Blackpool. It has a pupil capacity of 656 and had around 580 pupils on roll as at July 2024. Pupil numbers includes the academy's maintained nursery.

In accordance with the articles of association the Charitable Company has adopted a "Scheme of Governance" approved by the Secretary of State for Education. The Scheme of Governance specifies, amongst other things, the basis for admitting students to the Academy, the catchment area from which the students are drawn, and that the curriculum should be broad, balanced and comply with the substance of the national curriculum.

#### **Structure, governance and management**

##### **Constitution**

Zest Academy Trusts incorporated name change came in to force on 22 April 2016. The Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The Charitable Company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents of the Academy Trust.

The Academy Trust name change was incorporated on 22nd April 2016 following Waterloo Primary Academy's incorporation on 29th May 2012.

The Directors are the trustees of Zest Academy Trust and are also the directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law. Details of the Directors who served during the year are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 1.

##### **Members' liability**

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

##### **Trustees' indemnities**

The Academy has purchased indemnity insurance to protect governors and officers from claims arising in connection with Academy business. The insurance provides cover of up to £5,000,000 on any one claim.

## **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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

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#### **Method of recruitment and appointment or election of Directors**

##### **Members**

The Articles of Associations under Article 12 states that the number of members of the Academy Trust shall not be less than three.

##### **Trustees / Directors**

The Articles of Associations under Article 45 states that the number of Trustees of the Academy Trust shall not be less than three but (unless otherwise determined by ordinary resolution) shall not be subject to any maximum.

Subject to Articles 48-49 and 53 the Academy Trust shall have the following Trustees:

- 5 trustees appointed under Article 50
- minimum of 2 parent trustees under Articles 53-56 in the event that no Academy Councils are established
- Co-opted trustees under Article 58
- Original trustees named in the statement delivered pursuant to sections 9 and 12 of the Companies Act 2006
- The total number of trustees including the Chief Executive Officer under Article 57 shall not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees

Zest Academy Trust recognise the importance of transparency and are working towards limiting the number of 'staff trustees' on the board to just the Chief Executive Officer.

##### **Academy Councils**

The Academy Trust has appointed Academy Councils within its academies with the membership structure as follows:

- 2 parent academy council members
- 1 teaching academy council member
- 1 non-teaching academy council member
- Academy Council Members as appointed by the board of Trustees

The term of office for any Trustee or Academy Council Member shall be 4 years, save that this time limit shall not apply to any post which is held ex officio. Subject to remaining eligible to be a particular type of Trustee, any Trustee may be re-appointed or re-elected.

#### **Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of Directors**

The training and induction provided for new Members, Trustees and Academy Council Members will depend on their existing experience.

All Members, Trustees and Academy Council Members are provided with copies of key documents, such as policies, procedures, financial statements, budgets, plans and other documents on appointment and in relation to their role.

Induction is undertaken for all those in governance, which highlights their responsibilities and accountabilities. Further training is offered by the Trust and also National Governance Association.

Ongoing development of Academy Council Members and Trustees remains an important priority. The Trust board is seeking to appoint new Trustees and Members and as such, will focus on induction. The Trust held a Trust Development Day for Trustees in November 2024 for the Trustees to enhance their working knowledge of the school, on an operational and strategic level. This allowed the trustees to see the new curriculum implementation and to share the success stories. The day was replicated for the Academy Council later in the school year. All who attended commented on how useful the day was.

## **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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

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##### **Organisational structure**

The Academy Trust consists of four levels of organisation structure: Members, Trustees / Directors, Academy Council Members, the CEO and Senior Leadership Team. The Trust continue to have a separate Finance, Risk and Audit Committee whom have delegated responsibilities as identified in their Terms of Reference. The finance team continue to work closely with this committee who question accountability monthly.

Over the last year, Zest Academy Trust have continued to work with Glove Consultancy, the CST (Confederation of School Trusts) and Trust Governance Professionals (TGP) on governance best practice.

Members are accountable for:

- determining the Trust constitution
- vision and values
- appointing and removing Trustees
- approving the Trusts annual financial statements

Trustees are responsible for:

- strategy and leadership
- policies and practice
- financial management
- risk management
- central services
- safeguarding
- strategy for growth

Academy Council members are responsible for:

- curriculum and standards
- teaching and learning
- pupil progress
- annual budget monitoring
- academy admissions

Academy Council Members have powers delegated to them from the Trustees to make decisions on behalf of the academy as detailed in the scheme of delegation. The scheme of delegation has been reviewed in the year 2023-2024 to show clear lines of accountability in line with the academies Financial Handbook and Governance Handbook.

During the course of 2024-2025 academic year the Trust met four times, with members also meeting to undertake their Annual General Meeting to sign off the Trust financial statements.

The Trustees regularly reviewed the financial scheme of delegation, which clearly sets out the level of financial authority delegated to the CEO (who is the Accounting Officer) and other members of staff. The Scheme of Delegation was updated and reviewed in 2024 with growth anticipated. The financial scheme of delegation has been reviewed alongside the scheme of delegation and is awaiting approval.

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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

Zest Academy Trust has a robust performance management policy in place for setting pay and remuneration for key Trust personnel.

Rigorous performance targets are set in the autumn term by the Headteacher appraisal committee, comprising the Chair of the Waterloo Academy Council, Local Academy Board members and Zest Trustees (including the CEO), facilitated by the independent School Adviser. These progress measures are reviewed regularly but are linked to pupil progress, strategic leadership and individual operational performance. Targets are reviewed three times throughout the year. Recommendations are then made to the full Academy Council and Trustees.

#### Trade union facility time

The Trust does not have any relevant union officials.

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

Zest Academy Trust is a Multi Academy Trust with one academy, Waterloo Primary Academy.

The Trust works closely with a cluster of local Blackpool academies, sharing best practice and working collaboratively on a variety of topics. The Trust offers traded services to other organisations for HR. They currently have no one that they are providing this service to, however we do share this offer.

The trust currently has one related party company transaction. This related party transaction, this has been recorded correctly on the related party transactions portal and records are kept at school and trust level.

#### **Objectives and activities**

##### **Objects and aims**

Zest Academy Trust is ambitious, optimistic and forward thinking. It aims to:

- recruit and retain high quality staff
- deliver and develop quality first teaching. Provide a relevant and engaging curriculum
- build capacity for improvement with schools
- promote wellbeing
- celebrate diversity
- deliver rapid and sustained improvement

The Trust is committed to achieving high outcomes for all its children. Headteachers, supported by Academy Council Members and Trustees, are committed fully to securing the highest standards and to sustaining improvement in all areas of the school's work. The Trust benefits from a very high standard of experienced leadership, not only in the Trust but also within its academy.

Zest Academy Trust will:

- promote a love of learning, have a constant focus on teaching and assessment and will effectively manage all its resources
- prepare our children for life's challenges by creating innovative, safe learning environments that challenge preconceptions and expectations
- value each member of the Zest learning community by trusting, supporting and treating each other with dignity and respect
- enable our family of schools to maintain and develop their own school identity, sharing innovative practice and support
- enable staff to develop professionally and share their enthusiasm and love of learning with the children in their care
- share expertise and experience within the Zest community and will collaboratively support professional development and build effective learning capacity
- always challenge to improve

# **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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

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

The Trusts' long term objective is to establish a successful Multi Academy Trust which works collaboratively with its academies. The Trust has the capacity to sponsor schools who are in need of support and identified by the Regional Director after the DfE has issued an academy order.

We firmly believe that our Trust should:

- provide guidance and support
- challenge where appropriate
- work collaboratively
- be committed to improving outcomes for children

The Trust is also committed to adhering to the 7 principles of public life, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership (the Nolan Principles).

We remain committed to fulfilling our objectives and aims, we are ambitious as a Trust, optimistic and forward thinking.

Exit surveys from staff who leave us, suggest they are happy with the level of wellbeing and CPD they receive, many of our departing staff actually leave us for promotions, which we hope we have prepared them for through opportunities within our own Trust.

The Trust's founding school has seen sustained improvement in the last three years, in a bid to eradicate weaker teaching, thus improving outcomes for all the children in the Trust. The appointment of the Head of School has further strengthened the academy, improving teaching & learning, curriculum developments and behaviour.

Further development of the Finance, Audit and Risk committee has shown great change in our trust governance structure providing us with question and considerations from another level. The team have been scrutinised monthly to ensure we are providing the best level of finance and procurement for the Trust.

#### **Public benefit**

The Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission Guidance on providing public benefit and have had due regard to this in exercising their duties during the year. The key public benefit delivered by Zest Academy Trust as identified in the Articles of Association is to provide education to the young people of the community it serves.

#### **Strategic report**

##### **Achievements and performance**

##### **GLD (EYFS YR)**

Waterloo: 72.9%

LA: 62.8%

National: 69%

Our GLD rose 2.9% last year. This increase was due to a number of factors:

- the new curriculum was rolled out across the year. The combination of ELS, Power Math's, Mastering Number and CUSP makes the EYFS curriculum offer extremely ambitious and challenging.
- staff undertook a significant amount of CPD around the Teaching and Learning Strategy. This ensured that high quality practice had a greater impact on pupil progress.
- the cohort was much more stable than the previous year



# ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

## TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### Y1 Phonics

Waterloo: 74%

LA: 80%

National: 80%

The school has once again partnered closely with the English Hub to quality assure the teaching of phonics. Observation feedback from the Hub consistently demonstrates high quality practice from both teachers and the support staff who lead the 1:1 intervention. All pupils in EYFS, KS1 & KS2 are tracked on Phonics Tracker and their progress is continuously monitored and reviewed. All children in KS2 who need phonics support are now in receipt of daily ELS interventions and the reading scheme at KS2 has been overhauled to ensure that reading books are matched to children's phonic ability. All support staff are now trained in the delivery of ELS interventions.

The Phonics Screening Check data was once again affected by a number of non-routine admissions in Y1, some of whom arrived during, or very close to, Phonics Screening week.

#### End of KS1 (Y2)

##### Teacher Assessments

	Reading		GPS		Mathematics	
	≥ EXP	GDS	≥ EXP	GDS	≥ EXP	GDS
<b>2024</b>	50%		38%		59%	
<b>2025</b>	61%	4%	39%	1%	72%	8%

The results of these teacher assessments are derived from assessments made throughout the year in core subjects. The teacher judgement now includes information derived from the NFER summative tests, alongside the Power Math's assessments. The school's 2025 results demonstrate an improvement from 2024. This particular cohort achieved broadly in line with National GLD data in 2023, but they have also benefited from a strengthened curriculum offer and teaching pedagogy.

#### Y4 Multiplication Check

The multiplication tables check is a live, computer-based assessment. There are 25 questions from tables up to 12X. There is no published pass mark, or 'expected standard threshold' for the test.

2025		2024		2023	
Range	%	Range	%	Range	%
(0 - 5)	4%	(0 - 5)	2%	(0 - 5)	9%
(6 - 10)	6%	(6 - 10)	9%	(6 - 10)	17%
(11 - 15)	13%	(11 - 15)	24%	(11 - 15)	30%
(16 - 20)	17%	(16 - 20)	19%	(16 - 20)	21%
(21 - 25)	60%	(21 - 25)	46%	(21 - 25)	22%

The 2025 result demonstrates a marked improvement on 2024 data. The percentage of children in the bottom two brackets is lower than previous years. 27% of children achieved full marks (up from 13% the previous year) and the mean score rose to 19.15 from 18.38. The national mean score is 21.1, so we continue to focus on daily times table teaching in order to continue on this improvement journey.

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### End of KS2 (Y6)

	Reading		Writing (TA)		GPS		Mathematics		Combined	
	≥EXP	GDS	≥EXP	GDS	≥EXP	GDS	≥EXP	GDS	≥EXP	GDS
<b>Waterloo 2025</b>	81%	51%	70%	1%	82%	40%	84%	36%	69%	1%
<b>Waterloo 2024</b>	77%	28%	62%	0%	74%	27%	72%	10%	56%	0
<b>LA</b>	69%	26%	64%	7%	?%	?%	68%	22%	55%	4%
<b>National</b>	75%	33%	72%	13%	73%	30%	74%	26%	62%	8%

This Waterloo data shows a marked improvement on the 2024 data. Waterloo has stronger data across the board than the LA average and similar data to the national average. All KS2 data will be 'attainment'. Due to COVID (and this cohort not sitting Y2 SATS) there is no progress measures this year

#### Key performance indicators

The trust looked at the following KPIs in the academic year:

Staff Costs as a percentage of the total costs were 79.2% (2024: 79.6%). Staff costs have remained consistent as a percentage of overall. Spending on premises costs as a percentage of total expenditure were 8.9% (2024: 6.8%). The trust saw an increase in energy costs in the year. Other spending has slightly decreased as a percentage for total expenditure of 11.8% (2024: 13.6%). This was due to large investment in education resources in the prior year due to improvements in curriculum following the Ofsted inspection

#### Going concern

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

#### Financial review

The Trust's total incoming resources during the period were £4,518,102 (2024: £4,075,419). The majority of the Trust's income derives from central government funding via the Education and Skills Funding Agency, in the form of current grants. Total funding received for the Trust's educational operations in the period was £4,461,017 (2024: £4,014,181) and further details are provided in note 4 to the financial statements.

Total outgoing resources for the period were £4,960,569 (2024: £4,395,980) all of which related to the direct provision of educational operations and further details are provided in note 5 to the financial statements.

The in year deficit on restricted general funds (excluding pension reserve) and unrestricted funds was £380,736 (2024: deficit £278,229).

At the period end the Trust's total reserves were £4,199,417 (2024: £4,711,884) details of which are included in note 17 to the financial statements.

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

On conversion in 2011 the Trust inherited a deficit of £956,000 in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme, which many of the non-teaching staff belong to. This deficit had decreased to £nil by 31 August 2025, mainly due to changes in actuarial assumptions regarding future returns on investments and the present value of future liabilities. The Trust does not have an obligation to settle this liability immediately and there are no indications that it will crystallise in the foreseeable future.

Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, to 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.

At 31 August 2025 all assets shown in the financial statements were used exclusively for providing education and associated support services to students of the Trust.

#### Reserves policy

The Trust Board review the reserve levels each year. The review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. The reason for this is to provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipt of grants and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies such as urgent maintenance and repairs.

The Trusts current reserves, net of amounts allocated to fixed assets and the pension deficit, are £730,925 (2024: £1,111,661).

The Trust will take appropriate action to ensure that reserves are always at a prudent level.

At 31 August 2025 the Trust held the following reserves.

	2025	2024
Total reserves	4,199,417	4,711,884
Add back Pension reserve	-	-
Less reserves attributable to Fixed assets	(3,468,492)	(3,600,223)
Unrestricted and general restricted funds	730,925	1,111,661
Less restricted general funds	(494,288)	(861,661)
Free reserves	236,637	250,000

#### Restricted GAG reserves

The Trustees have considered the level of GAG reserves which they believe will provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between the spending and receipt of grants and unexpected or planned future revenue and capital costs. At 31 August 2025 the school held GAG reserves of £477,332 (2024: £861,661). The Trust aim to have in their reserves at least two month's salary and business costs with additional costs being accumulated for school improvement. At 31 August 2025, the Trust's GAG reserves are currently lower than the policy at approximately on month's salary and business costs. To address our reserves the trust are currently and have been forecasting changes in the school such as reducing costs through how we deliver PE etc so we can utilise some of our current staff to reduce costs in expenditure. This is something that the trust are highly aware of and are monitoring thoroughly with the CFO every month.

## **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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

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##### Unrestricted reserves

In addition to the GAG reserve, which can only be utilised for the restricted purposes set out in the Funding Agreement, the Trust holds unrestricted free reserves, which provide additional working capital and are not committed or designated at 31 August 2025 the level of unrestricted reserves held was £236,637 (2024:£250,000), which is in line with the reserves policy.

##### **Investment policy**

All investments are agreed by the board of Trustees, which has regard to the Charity Commission guidance in relation to charity investment policy. The Trust does not currently hold any investments other than cash, which is held for its normal operations. The Trustees have adopted a low risk strategy to its cash holdings. Surplus cash is held in an instant access deposit account to ensure that there is always access to sufficient cash to meet short and medium term requirements.

##### **Principal risks and uncertainties**

Major risks, including those related to teaching quality, facility provision, operational activities, and financial health, are regularly reviewed. Trustees have planned for increasing teacher costs and approved a 3-year deficit budget supported by reserves. However, this was approved with the understanding that further cost-saving measures will be implemented. Staffing structures across all areas will be reviewed to identify opportunities for efficiency and cost reduction, ensuring financial sustainability.

Trustees are actively involved in risk management and meet regularly to assess and address emerging challenges.

The internal financial systems of delegation are based on the Academies Trust Handbook alongside the Trusts scheme of delegation and financial management procedures. The systems are based on a framework of segregation of duties, schemes of delegation that include authorisation and approval at each layer.

All Trustees on a monthly basis receive;

- A copy of the Trust Management Accounts
- A copy of the Trusts Aged Creditors
- A copy of the Trusts Aged Debtors
- A copy of the Trusts Cash Flow Statement
- A copy of the Trust Cash Flow Forecast
- A copy of the Balance Sheet
- A copy of the VAT submission
- A copy of the Contracts
- A copy of the Accrued/Prepaid income and expenditure

Both Trustees and Academy Council Members, also receive quarterly reports which are differentiated depending on the layer of governance they fall under.

The Trust continues to utilise the Internal Scrutiny process. The internal scrutiny role has been performed by School Business Services Ltd and reports have been presented to Trustees. No major issues have been identified and any recommendations have been implemented.

## **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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

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##### Financial and risk management objectives and policies

The Trust receives a portion of its income on a monthly basis and manages its cash flow accordingly.

The key Trust financial objectives are;

- Adhere to the 7 principles of public life
- Apply at all time, best value principles
- Monitor and report on financial matters
- Ensure that all financial transactions are open and transparent

In line with the financial objectives the Trust recognises that risk management is key to the success of the Trust and as such the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Operations Officer reviews the risk register on a monthly basis. The risk register considers strategic and reputational risks, operational risk, compliance risks and financial risks. The risk register is a live working document.

The Trust also regularly undertakes horizon scanning and keeps up to date with new policy and legislation changes that could impact on the Trusts financial position of otherwise.

##### **Fundraising**

The Academy Trust has undertaken fundraising during 2024/25 where funds have been raised to support local and national charities. Traditional approaches to fundraising have been used, including non-uniform days. All funds are collected by the Finance Department and paid to the relevant charity via BACS or directly to the charity chosen bank.

All fundraising activities are monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and are undertaken in accordance with regulations. The Academy does not work with professional fundraisers or commercial participators and has received no complaints in relation to its fundraising activities.

## **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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

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##### **Plans for future periods**

The Trusts strategic development plan outlines its growth strategy. Whilst continuing to raise standards at Waterloo Primary Academy, we are keen to grow. The Executive team continue to liaise with the Regional DfE Director for the North West and her team. As Waterloo received an overall judgement of Requires Improvement in November 2023, the priority for the Trust has been the development of the school - the overall quality of education, the taught curriculum and changes to teaching and learning practice, which should impact positively on outcomes and future evaluations of the school and its performance. This has been one of the main focuses for the Trust this academic year has been to support the development and improvement in Waterloo Primary Academy, looking at the results achieved in the academic year it has proven a great success of this support.

The Trust has continued to provide support to other schools and academies and will continue this line of income generation. In the academic year 2024/25, the CEO acts as an education consultant & adviser to the Diocese of Carlisle, for which Trust income will be generated.

This year has seen the full implementation of the school's revised curriculum, and it has been encouraging to see how far the school has come. The curriculum has been completely overhauled and is now solidly underpinned by the CUSP curriculum, Power Maths and ELS Phonics. These elements are now firmly in place across all year groups, and staff confidence and consistency have grown considerably. Monitoring through lesson visits, pupil book studies and pupil voice shows that the structure and intent of the curriculum are being delivered with increasing fidelity. It has been particularly rewarding to see pupils talking about their learning with enthusiasm and pride, and to hear them make meaningful connections across subjects.

The alignment between the CUSP lesson model and the school's new Teaching and Learning Strategy has brought a shared understanding of what effective teaching looks like at Waterloo. Teachers have embraced this, and the consistency it brings is starting to show in both classroom practice and pupil progress.

Importantly, the curriculum is inclusive and ambitious for all. Adaptive practice is now an integral part of planning and teaching, ensuring that pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged access the same rich learning experiences as their peers.

The development of The Hive has strengthened this work further, providing a flexible and nurturing approach for some of our most vulnerable children that still connects closely to the wider school curriculum.

The school's work with the Maths Hub has had a very positive impact on both staff confidence and pupil outcomes. Power Maths is now well established from EYFS to Year 6, and there is a strong sense of shared understanding around the mastery approach. Through coaching, team teaching and professional dialogue, teachers have refined their practice, and pupils are benefiting from a consistent and well-structured approach to the teaching of maths. The impact of this can be seen in the data and in pupils' growing fluency and confidence.

The introduction of Mastering Number at KS2 will support fluency and number sense across Years 4 and 5, and staff have welcomed the opportunity to participate in this national programme having seen the positive impact of Mastering Number across EYFS & KS1.

Subject leadership has continued to develop with the support of the CUSP central team and the English and Maths Hub teams. Leaders are now much more confident in their areas and work closely with Leonie Fairnie (Curriculum Lead) to monitor, support and develop practice across school. Monitoring activities, including learning walks, pupil book studies and staff reflection, are now embedded and used effectively to inform next steps. Leaders are using evidence from their monitoring to shape professional development, identify good practice and address areas that need further attention.

## **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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

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The introduction of retrieval-based assessment and cumulative quizzing within CUSP has supported both staff and pupils in understanding how knowledge builds over time. This has been particularly effective in developing long-term recall and confidence in the wider curriculum.

Alongside the above data, there has been a significant improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils for the second consecutive year.

In Reading, the proportion of disadvantaged children achieving the expected standard increased from 71% (2024) to 78% (2025). In Writing, achievement rose from 53% to 64% and in Maths, achievement increased from 67% to 81%.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving Greater Depth has also improved markedly:

- Reading - from 22% to 51%
- Maths - from 3% to 33%
- Writing - from 0% to 1%

These results, in conjunction with those shared previously, represent the combined efforts of many staff and demonstrate the impact of a more coherent curriculum, well-targeted assessment and consistent teaching.

The Waterloo curriculum is now securely in place, subject leadership is strengthening and the impact is evident in both teaching quality and pupil outcomes. Staff across the school have worked incredibly hard to bring consistency and ambition to the curriculum, and the progress made this year is something we can all be proud of. While there are still areas to refine, particularly around writing and maintaining fidelity to the core teaching principles, the progress so far reflects the strength of the staff's shared commitment and teamwork and the headteacher is very proud of the way the staff team continues to learn, adapt and grow together.

One of the biggest priorities as a Trust is a positive inspection outcome for the founding Academy, which should lead to sustainability growth, through effective promotion and relationships with schools. The Trust are expecting positive growth in the near future however the recent inspection outcome is rightly focusing attention on securing improvement in the school. The CEO and executive team have worked very closely with external advisers and are keen to promote the Trust in the most positive light despite the recent report, having established positive relationships with many local schools through effective school to school support and traded services offered. The Trust has appointed a governance professional who will act as a strategic link between the academy councils and the board of Trustees and has established good links with a number of other successful Mats. This has proven to be a valuable asset to the development of Governance.

The Trustees approved the redevelopment of the EYFS Reception outdoor area to ensure that the quality of the outdoor provision, matches that of the indoors. In order to do this, we needed to invest in a re-development project. A business case was provided for Trustee approval with quotes. The development of a school library remains in place for this academic year. The current library is very small and is not fit for purpose. The positioning of it means that children cannot access it independently and therefore they cannot use it as frequently as we would like, reading is a high priority on the school development plan. The school continue to develop Opal Play. This will enable us to develop wider opportunities for play during break and lunchtimes.

In addition, further central team roles have been identified along with a financial model, and effective local governance is in place. A full review of Trust governance arrangements will provide assurance that this aspect of their operation is sound and prepared for. The CEO meets with the RD team regularly to discuss developments. The Trust have had an SMRA review during the academic year that has allowed them to identify areas to look at to improve financial sustainability. The Trust have used this to help to plan for future budgets looking at staffing structures and pupil numbers forecasting more realistically, ensuring that they are using their resources appropriately.

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

For the year ending 31 August 2025 there are no assets and arrangements for safe custody segregation.

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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**Auditor**

In so far as the Directors are aware:

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

A resolution proposing that MHA be reappointed as auditor of the charitable company will be put to the members.

The Trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on ~~December 16, 2025~~ and signed on its behalf by:

  
.....  
**Mrs R L Foxton**  
**Chair**



## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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##### Scope of responsibility

As Directors, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Zest 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.

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Headteacher, 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 Zest Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. The accounting officer is also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

##### Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has formally met 4 times during the year. The finance and audit responsibilities are included within the board of directors meetings and no separate committee is set up for these responsibilities.

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

Directors	Meetings attended	Out of possible
Mr M J Hamblett (Accounting Officer)	4	4
Mrs R L Foxton (Chair)	4	4
Mr R Knaggs	2	4
Mr S Farndon	4	4
Mr S J Bradshaw (Appointed 1 September 2024)	2	4

While the full Board has met four times in the year, the Trust has an established finance and audit committee of the Board that now meets throughout the year and informs the Board. As a result of these the Board maintains effective oversight of funds. The Finance team have monthly communication with the Finance, audit and risk committee. Who analyse the monthly management account and raise necessary questions monthly. Record of this communication is held by the finance team. The finance team also met on other occasions when producing the Budget to ensure that we were delivering an achievable and realistic budget and future planning. The Trustees have spent a day in school taking part in self-evaluation exercises, lesson visits, speaking to staff and pupils and other monitoring activities. Trustees have also attended training provided by the School Improvement Provider and continue to engage with school in order to best support and challenge leadership decisions.

Meetings held for the Academic year 2024-25 have been held as a hybrid of virtual and in-person due to the geographic constraints and availability. Trustees have maintained regular contact through email, the online platform GovernorHub and virtual meetings. Communication with Directors and Members has been maintained throughout the year, updating them when submissions have been made. The internal scrutiny plan was shared with trustees at the beginning of the year and following all internal scrutiny reviews, the findings have been shared with the Trustees on GovernorHub.

##### Conflicts of interest

The Trust maintains an up-to-date and complete register of interests and at each meeting board members are asked to declare any interests. The CFO reviews for any transactions.

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### Governance reviews

An external governance review has been commissioned and this work has begun, however the piece of work has not yet concluded. Trustees and governors complete a skills audit annually to ensure the Trust has a variety of professional skillsets and recruitment of new Trustees can be targeted with particular skills in mind.

The Finance and Audit committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to assist the decision making of the Board, by enabling more detailed consideration to be given to the best means of fulfilling the Board's responsibility to ensure sound management of the Trust's finances and resources, including proper planning, monitoring and probity.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Directors	Meetings attended	Out of possible
Mr M J Hamblett (Accounting Officer)	3	3
Mrs R L Foxton (Chair)	3	3
Mr S Farndon	3	3

#### Review of value for money

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

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

- Quality first teaching
- Improved assessment and tracking systems
- New financial software to streamline process
- New educational curriculum
- Business consultancy in both financial and educational
- Robust procurement and contract management processes in place.
- Preparing business cases

The Trust have introduced business cases to ensure that they are always sourcing value for money. The project manager completes a business case detailing the purpose of the expenditure and providing three quotes as evidence of obtaining value for money.

As disclosed in note 23, the Trust engaged with Dimensions Curriculum Ltd, a related party of another member of the local governing body of Waterloo School in connection with curriculum design. In respect of the curriculum design, alternative providers and associated costs were discussed at Trust Board level in the prior year, without the involvement of the local governing body member. Dimensions Curriculum Ltd offered a bespoke curriculum design, something which is difficult to procure on a like-for-like basis. The Trust Board were satisfied that the transaction represented good value for money.

All transactions with these related parties were reported to the ESFA during the year in line with the requirements for reporting related party transactions.

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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

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

##### **Capacity to handle risk**

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

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

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

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees;
- regular reviews by the board of Trustees 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;
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- identification and management of risks;
- Robust systems and controls in place to identify risks.

The Board of Trustees considered the need for a specific internal audit function and decided not to appoint an internal auditor. However the Directors appointed School Business Services Ltd, an external firm to provide internal scrutiny for the period of 2024-2025.

The role of the internal auditor includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the Academy Trust's financial systems. Trustees of the Trust identify the focus of the internal audit.

The visits for 2024/25 were undertaken in November 2024, January 2025 and April 2025. The following systems were reviewed:

- Payroll Processing
- HR Management
- Operational Estates Management

All findings are presented to the Trust Board and documentation uploaded to Governor Hub. All feedback has been actioned with immediate effect.

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Review of effectiveness

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

- The work of the responsible officer
- The work of the external auditor
- The financial management and governance self-assessment process
- The work of the executive managers within the Academy Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the Trustees and Academy Council Members of Waterloo Primary Academy and 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.

December 16, 2025

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



**Mr M J Hamblett**  
**Accounting Officer**



**Mrs R L Foxton**  
**Chair**

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

**STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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

I confirm that I and the Board of Trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of all funds by the Academy Trust, or material non-compliance with the framework of authorities.

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



**Mr M J Hamblett**  
**Accounting Officer**

December 17, 2025  
Date: .....

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the Directors 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 Directors are required to:

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

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

The Directors 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.

December 16, 2025

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

*Bucky Foxton*

**Mrs R L Foxton**  
**Chair**

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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#### Opinion

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

In our opinion the financial statements:

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

#### Basis for opinion

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

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

#### Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Directors 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.

## **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

### **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF ZEST ACADEMY TRUST (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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

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

- the information given in the Trustees' report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements;
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the Trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Academy Trust and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

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

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 Directors**

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustees' responsibilities, the Directors 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 Directors 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 Directors are responsible for assessing the Academy Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Directors either intend to liquidate the charitable company, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

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

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

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 specific procedures for this engagement and the extent to which these are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below:

- Enquiries with management, including trustees, about any known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations and fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Reviewing internal audit reports;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Reviewing the systems for recording revenue and to ensure income has been recognised in the correct period; and
- Auditing the risk of management override of controls, including through testing journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness.



## **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

### **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF ZEST ACADEMY TRUST (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

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

#### **Use of our report**

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

**Nicola Mason MA(Cantab) FCA DChA**

Senior Statutory Auditor

For and on behalf of MHA, Statutory Auditor

Preston, United Kingdom

Date: .....

MHA is the trading name of MHA Audit Services LLP, a limited liability partnership in England and Wales (registered number OC455542)

## **ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

### **INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT ON REGULARITY TO ZEST ACADEMY TRUST AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 8 April 2025 and further to the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) as included in the extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Academy Trusts, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether anything has come to our attention that would suggest, in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received by Zest Academy Trust during the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 have not been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

#### **Respective responsibilities of the accounting officer of Zest Academy Trust and the reporting accountant**

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

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

#### **Approach**

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

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

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

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

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes an evaluation of the control environment of the School together with enquiry, analytical review, substantive testing of transactions and consideration of governance issues.

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

**INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT ON REGULARITY TO ZEST ACADEMY TRUST  
AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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**Conclusion**

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

**Reporting Accountant**

MHA  
Preston, United Kingdom

Date: .....

MHA is the trading name of MHA Audit Services LLP, a limited liability partnership in England and Wales (registered number OC455542)

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted general funds	Restricted fixed asset funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
	Notes	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>						
Donations and capital grants	3	2,694	-	10,678	13,372	11,565
Charitable activities:						
- Funding for educational operations	4	70,046	4,390,971	-	4,461,017	4,014,181
Other trading activities	5	43,604	-	-	43,604	49,524
Investments	6	109	-	-	109	149
<b>Total</b>		<u>116,453</u>	<u>4,390,971</u>	<u>10,678</u>	<u>4,518,102</u>	<u>4,075,419</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>						
Charitable activities:						
- Educational operations	9	<u>116,453</u>	<u>4,701,385</u>	<u>142,731</u>	<u>4,960,569</u>	<u>4,395,980</u>
<b>Total</b>	7	<u>116,453</u>	<u>4,701,385</u>	<u>142,731</u>	<u>4,960,569</u>	<u>4,395,980</u>
<b>Net expenditure</b>		-	(310,414)	(132,053)	(442,467)	(320,561)
Transfers between funds	17	(13,363)	13,041	322	-	-
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses)</b>						
Actuarial losses on defined benefit pension schemes	19	<u>-</u>	<u>(70,000)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(70,000)</u>	<u>(73,000)</u>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		(13,363)	(367,373)	(131,731)	(512,467)	(393,561)
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward		<u>250,000</u>	<u>861,661</u>	<u>3,600,223</u>	<u>4,711,884</u>	<u>5,105,445</u>
Total funds carried forward	17	<u>236,637</u>	<u>494,288</u>	<u>3,468,492</u>	<u>4,199,417</u>	<u>4,711,884</u>

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST****BALANCE SHEET****AS AT 31 AUGUST 2025**

		2025		2024	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	13	3,468,492		3,600,223	
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	14	296,593		207,511	
Cash at bank and in hand		653,274		1,065,198	
		<u>949,867</u>		<u>1,272,709</u>	
<b>Current liabilities</b>					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	<u>(218,942)</u>		<u>(161,048)</u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			730,925		1,111,661
<b>Net assets excluding pension asset</b>			4,199,417		4,711,884
Defined benefit pension scheme asset	19		-		-
<b>Total net assets</b>			<u>4,199,417</u>		<u>4,711,884</u>
<b>Funds of the Academy Trust:</b>					
<b>Restricted funds</b>	17				
- Fixed asset funds			3,468,492		3,600,223
- Restricted income funds			494,288		861,661
<b>Total restricted funds</b>			<u>3,962,780</u>		<u>4,461,884</u>
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>	17		<u>236,637</u>		<u>250,000</u>
<b>Total funds</b>			<u>4,199,417</u>		<u>4,711,884</u>

The financial statements on pages 26 to 49 were approved by the Directors and authorised for issue on December 16, 2025 and are signed on their behalf by:

*Bucky Foxton*

**Mrs R L Foxton**  
**Chair**

Company registration number 08087508 (England and Wales)

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST****STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

		<b>2025</b>		<b>2024</b>	
	<b>Notes</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Net cash used in operating activities	<b>20</b>	(411,711)		(325,219)	
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>					
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		109		149	
Capital grants from DfE Group		10,678		10,522	
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(11,000)		(31,628)	
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>			(213)		(20,957)
<b>Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period</b>			(411,924)		(346,176)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year			1,065,198		1,411,374
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year</b>			653,274		1,065,198

# ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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### 1 Accounting policies

Zest Academy Trust is a charitable company. The address of its principal place of business is given on page 1 and the nature of its operations are set out in the Trustees' report.

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

#### 1.1 Basis of preparation

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

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

#### 1.2 Going concern

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

#### 1.3 Income

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

##### Grants

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

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

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

# ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

##### Sponsorship income

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

##### Donations

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

##### Other income

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

##### Donated goods, facilities and services

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

##### Donated fixed assets

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

#### 1.4 Expenditure

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

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

##### Expenditure on raising funds

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

##### Charitable activities

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



# ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

##### 1.5 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

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.

Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with the aid of specific grants, either from the government or from the private sector, they are included in the balance sheet at cost and depreciated over their expected useful economic life. The related grants are credited to a restricted fixed asset fund in the statement of financial activities and carried forward in the balance sheet. Depreciation on such assets is charged to the restricted fixed asset fund in the statement of financial activities so as to reduce the fund over the useful economic life of the related asset on a basis consistent with the Academy Trust's depreciation policy. 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, at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset on a straight-line basis over its expected useful life, as follows:

Land and buildings	Over the lease term/2%
Computer equipment	3 years
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	4 to 5 years

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

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

##### 1.6 Liabilities

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

##### 1.7 Leased assets

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

##### 1.8 Financial instruments

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

###### Financial assets

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

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

# ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

##### Financial liabilities

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

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

#### 1.9 Taxation

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

#### 1.10 Pensions benefits

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

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

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

#### 1.11 Fund accounting

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

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

Restricted general funds comprise all other restricted funds received and include grants from the Education Funding Agency and other government bodies.

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

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

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

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

**Valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability**

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost or income for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 19, 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 2025. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

The judgments that have a significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements are those concerning the choice of depreciation policies and asset lives, and assessing whether any LGPS surplus should be recognised as a pension asset or whether the surplus should be restricted to some level or in total. FRS 102 section 28.22 states a plan surplus can be recognised only to the extent an entity is able to recover the surplus, either through reduced contributions in the future, or through refunds from the scheme. Further details in note 19.

Critical areas of judgement

**Classification and valuation of long leasehold land and buildings**

The academy's long leasehold land and buildings are held under a 125 year lease and are wholly used in the course of the academy's business and are held within the academy. No value was paid for the land and buildings, which have been incorporated into the financial statements as a donated asset, based on a depreciated replacement cost valuation carried out as at 31 March 2013 on behalf of the Department for Education by DTZ. This valuation has been adjusted to take account of depreciation in the period since conversion, to arrive at an estimate for the value of land and buildings acquired on conversion. Subsequent purchases of land and buildings are initially measured at cost.

**3 Donations and capital grants**

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Capital grants	-	10,678	10,678	10,522
Other donations	2,694	-	2,694	1,043
	<u>2,694</u>	<u>10,678</u>	<u>13,372</u>	<u>11,565</u>

The income from donations and capital grants was £13,372 (2024: £11,565) of which £2,694 was unrestricted (2024: £343), £- was restricted (2024: £700) and £10,678 was restricted fixed assets (2024: £10,522).

# ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 4 Funding for the Academy Trust's educational operations

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<b>DfE/ESFA grants</b>				
General annual grant (GAG)	-	2,979,078	2,979,078	2,801,565
Other DfE/ESFA grants:				
- UIFSM	-	52,452	52,452	52,397
- Pupil premium	-	455,995	455,995	457,603
- Others	-	292,003	292,003	273,104
	-	3,779,528	3,779,528	3,584,669
<b>Other government grants</b>				
Local authority grants	-	460,177	460,177	288,723
<b>Other incoming resources</b>	70,046	151,266	221,312	140,789
<b>Total funding</b>	70,046	4,390,971	4,461,017	4,014,181

The income from funding for educational operations was £4,461,017 (2024: £4,014,181) of which £70,046 was unrestricted (2024: £39,056) and £4,390,971 was restricted (2024: £3,975,125).

#### 5 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Other income	43,604	-	43,604	49,524

The income from other trading activities was £43,604 (2024: £49,524) of which £43,604 was unrestricted (2024: £49,524).

#### 6 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Short term deposits	109	-	109	149

The income from funding for investment income was £109 (2024: £149) of which £109 was unrestricted (2024: £149).

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****7 Expenditure**

	<b>Staff costs</b>	<b>Non-pay expenditure</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>Premises</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Academy's educational operations					
- Direct costs	3,573,552	15,771	409,406	3,998,729	3,605,373
- Allocated support costs	357,637	427,369	176,834	961,840	790,607
	<u>3,931,189</u>	<u>443,140</u>	<u>586,240</u>	<u>4,960,569</u>	<u>4,395,980</u>

**Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	142,731	146,960
Fees payable to auditor for:		
- Audit	14,000	12,760
- Other services	5,330	4,840
Net interest on defined benefit pension liability	(41,000)	(39,000)
	<u></u>	<u></u>

**8 Central services**

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

- human resources;
- financial services;
- legal services;
- educational support services.

The Academy Trust charges for these services on the following basis:

- time-apportioned based on staff costs.

The amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Waterloo Primary Academy	297,908	280,263
	<u>297,908</u>	<u>280,263</u>

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****9 Charitable activities**

	<b>Unrestricted funds £</b>	<b>Restricted funds £</b>	<b>Total 2025 £</b>	<b>Total 2024 £</b>
<b>Direct costs</b>				
Educational operations	99,311	3,899,418	3,998,729	3,605,373
<b>Support costs</b>				
Educational operations	17,142	944,698	961,840	790,607
	<u>116,453</u>	<u>4,844,116</u>	<u>4,960,569</u>	<u>4,395,980</u>

The expenditure on charitable activities was £4,960,569 (2024: £4,395,980) of which £116,453 was unrestricted (2024: £89,072), £4,701,385 was restricted (2024: £4,159,948) and £142,731 was restricted fixed assets (2024: £146,960).

**Analysis of support costs**

	<b>2025 £</b>	<b>2024 £</b>
Support staff costs	357,637	351,056
Depreciation	126,960	125,653
Premises costs	275,130	115,946
Legal costs	5,439	-
Other support costs	171,367	176,504
Governance costs	25,307	21,448
	<u>961,840</u>	<u>790,607</u>

**10 Staff****Staff costs and employee benefits**

Staff costs during the year were:

	<b>2025 £</b>	<b>2024 £</b>
Wages and salaries	2,649,066	2,522,732
Social security costs	292,026	233,359
Pension costs	577,810	487,351
	<u>3,518,902</u>	<u>3,243,442</u>
Staff costs - employees	3,518,902	3,243,442
Agency staff costs	412,287	255,261
	<u>3,931,189</u>	<u>3,498,703</u>

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

**10 Staff (Continued)**

**Staff numbers**

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

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Teachers	30	30
Administration and support	65	53
Management	3	3
	<u>98</u>	<u>86</u>

**Higher paid staff**

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

	2025 Number	2024 Number
£60,001 - £70,000	1	2
£70,001 - £80,000	-	1
£80,001 - £90,000	1	-
£110,001 - £120,000	-	1
£120,001 - £130,000	1	-
	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

**Key management personnel**

The key management personnel of the Academy Trust comprise the Directors and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy Trust was £314,439 (2024: £293,893).

**11 Trustees' remuneration and expenses**

One or more directors has been paid remuneration or has received other benefits from an employment with the academy trust. The principal and other staff directors only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of principal and staff members under their contracts of employment, and not in respect of their services as trustees. Other directors did not receive any payments, other than expenses, from the academy trust in respect of their role as directors.

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

M Hamblett - Principal:

Remuneration - £120,001 - £125,000 (2024: £110,001 - £120,000)

Employers' pension contributions - £35,001 - £40,000 (2024: £25,001 - £30,000)

During the year and prior year, no travel and subsistence expenses were reimbursed to Directors or members.

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****12 Trustees' and officers' insurance**

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the academy trust has purchased insurance to protect trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy trust business. The insurance provides cover up to £5,000,000 on any one claim and the cost of this insurance is included in the total insurance cost and is not separately identifiable.

**13 Tangible fixed assets**

	Land and buildings	Computer equipment	Fixtures, fittings & equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£
<b>Cost</b>				
At 1 September 2024	4,428,172	370,313	318,004	5,116,489
Additions	-	11,000	-	11,000
Disposals	-	(189,017)	(4,747)	(193,764)
At 31 August 2025	4,428,172	192,296	313,257	4,933,725
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 September 2024	945,133	348,754	222,379	1,516,266
On disposals	-	(189,017)	(4,747)	(193,764)
Charge for the year	85,548	15,771	41,412	142,731
At 31 August 2025	1,030,681	175,508	259,044	1,465,233
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31 August 2025	3,397,491	16,788	54,213	3,468,492
At 31 August 2024	3,483,039	21,559	95,625	3,600,223

The net book value of land and buildings comprises:

	2025 £	2024 £
Long leaseholds (over 50 years)	3,397,491	3,483,039

**14 Debtors**

	2025 £	2024 £
VAT recoverable	2,566	6,089
Other debtors	127,320	3,082
Prepayments and accrued income	166,707	198,340
	296,593	207,511



**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Trade creditors	-	2,265
Other creditors	23,430	22,968
Accruals and deferred income	195,512	135,815
	<u>218,942</u>	<u>161,048</u>

**16 Deferred income**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Deferred income is included within:		
Creditors due within one year	<u>32,693</u>	<u>33,430</u>
Deferred income at 1 September 2024	33,430	28,520
Released from previous years	(33,430)	(28,520)
Resources deferred in the year	<u>32,693</u>	<u>33,430</u>
Deferred income at 31 August 2025	<u>32,693</u>	<u>33,430</u>

At the balance sheet date the academy trust was holding funds from the UIFSM grants received in advance of the related expenditure.

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****17 Funds**

	Balance at 1 September 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains, losses and transfers £	Balance at 31 August 2025 £
<b>Restricted general funds</b>					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	861,661	2,979,078	(3,376,448)	13,041	477,332
UIFSM	-	52,452	(52,452)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	455,995	(455,995)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	292,003	(292,003)	-	-
Other government grants	-	460,177	(443,221)	-	16,956
Other restricted funds	-	151,266	(151,266)	-	-
Pension reserve	-	-	70,000	(70,000)	-
	<u>861,661</u>	<u>4,390,971</u>	<u>(4,701,385)</u>	<u>(56,959)</u>	<u>494,288</u>
<b>Restricted fixed asset funds</b>					
Inherited on conversion	2,755,908	-	(68,688)	-	2,687,220
DfE group capital grants	2,473	10,678	(2,473)	(10,678)	-
Capital expenditure from GAG	841,842	-	(71,570)	11,000	781,272
	<u>3,600,223</u>	<u>10,678</u>	<u>(142,731)</u>	<u>322</u>	<u>3,468,492</u>
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>4,461,884</u>	<u>4,401,649</u>	<u>(4,844,116)</u>	<u>(56,637)</u>	<u>3,962,780</u>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General funds	<u>250,000</u>	<u>116,453</u>	<u>(116,453)</u>	<u>(13,363)</u>	<u>236,637</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>4,711,884</u>	<u>4,518,102</u>	<u>(4,960,569)</u>	<u>(70,000)</u>	<u>4,199,417</u>

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 17 Funds

(Continued)

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

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

General Annual Grant must be used for the normal running expenses of the School and any amounts carried forward at the end of a financial period must be used in accordance with the terms of the Funding Agreement.

Other DfE/ESFA grants comprise additional funding received for the furtherance of education, which must be used in accordance with the specific terms of each grant.

Other government grants includes local authority nursery grants and other support staff funding.

Other restricted funds include contributions received for school trips.

The pension reserve represents the value of the School's share of the deficit in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Restricted fixed asset funds include assets inherited on conversion and expenditure out of GAG and other capital grants during the year. Depreciation is charged against the fund.

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****17 Funds****(Continued)**

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

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains, losses and transfers £	Balance at 31 August 2024 £
<b>Restricted general funds</b>					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,139,890	2,801,565	(3,058,688)	(21,106)	861,661
UIFSM	-	52,397	(52,397)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	457,603	(457,603)	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	273,104	(273,104)	-	-
Other government grants	-	288,723	(288,723)	-	-
Other restricted funds	-	102,433	(102,433)	-	-
Pension reserve	-	-	73,000	(73,000)	-
	<u>1,139,890</u>	<u>3,975,825</u>	<u>(4,159,948)</u>	<u>(94,106)</u>	<u>861,661</u>
<b>Restricted fixed asset funds</b>					
Inherited on conversion	2,824,596	-	(68,688)	-	2,755,908
DfE group capital grants	15,041	10,522	(12,568)	(10,522)	2,473
Capital expenditure from GAG	875,918	-	(65,704)	31,628	841,842
	<u>3,715,555</u>	<u>10,522</u>	<u>(146,960)</u>	<u>21,106</u>	<u>3,600,223</u>
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>4,855,445</u>	<u>3,986,347</u>	<u>(4,306,908)</u>	<u>(73,000)</u>	<u>4,461,884</u>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General funds	<u>250,000</u>	<u>89,072</u>	<u>(89,072)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>250,000</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>5,105,445</u>	<u>4,075,419</u>	<u>(4,395,980)</u>	<u>(73,000)</u>	<u>4,711,884</u>

**Total funds analysis by academy**

	2025 £	2024 £
Fund balances at 31 August 2025 were allocated as follows:		
Waterloo Primary Academy	724,288	1,090,788
Central services	6,637	20,873
Total before fixed assets fund and pension reserve	<u>730,925</u>	<u>1,111,661</u>
Restricted fixed asset fund	3,468,492	3,600,223
Pension reserve	-	-
Total funds	<u>4,199,417</u>	<u>4,711,884</u>

# ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 17 Funds

(Continued)

#### Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching and educational support staff £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Waterloo Primary Academy	3,398,007	288,650	381,176	430,944	4,498,777	3,939,725
Central services	175,544	68,988	28,231	46,298	319,061	309,295
	<u>3,573,551</u>	<u>357,638</u>	<u>409,407</u>	<u>477,242</u>	<u>4,817,838</u>	<u>4,249,020</u>

#### 18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted funds: General £	Fixed asset £	Total Funds £
<b>Fund balances at 31 August 2025 are represented by:</b>				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	3,468,492	3,468,492
Current assets	236,637	713,230	-	949,867
Current liabilities	-	(218,942)	-	(218,942)
<b>Total net assets</b>	<u>236,637</u>	<u>494,288</u>	<u>3,468,492</u>	<u>4,199,417</u>
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted funds: General £	Fixed asset £	Total Funds £
<b>Fund balances at 31 August 2024 are represented by:</b>				
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	3,600,223	3,600,223
Current assets	250,000	1,022,709	-	1,272,709
Current liabilities	-	(161,048)	-	(161,048)
<b>Total net assets</b>	<u>250,000</u>	<u>861,661</u>	<u>3,600,223</u>	<u>4,711,884</u>

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 19 Pension and similar obligations

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

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

Contributions amounting to £23,430 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2025 (2024: £22,646) and are included within creditors.

#### Teachers' Pension Scheme

##### Introduction

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

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

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

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

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 2027.

The employer's pension costs paid to the TPS in the period amounted to £ 436,522 (2024: £ 354,610).

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

# ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 19 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

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

#### Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contributions are as noted below. The agreed contribution rates for future years are 18.30% for employers and 5.5% to 12.5% for employees.

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

Total contributions made	2025 £	2024 £
Employer's contributions	211,000	206,000
Employees' contributions	68,000	67,000
	<u>279,000</u>	<u>273,000</u>

Principal actuarial assumptions	2025 %	2024 %
Rate of increase in salaries	4.00	4.1
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.60	2.7
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	6.20	5.0
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.50	2.6
	<u>2.50</u>	<u>2.6</u>

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

	2025 Years	2024 Years
Retiring today		
- Males	20.9	21.0
- Females	23.5	23.5
Retiring in 20 years		
- Males	22.0	22.2
- Females	25.0	25.3
	<u>25.0</u>	<u>25.3</u>

#### Sensitivity analysis

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

**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****19 Pension and similar obligations****(Continued)**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Discount rate + 0.1%	(65,000)	(87,000)
Discount rate - 0.1%	66,000	89,000
Mortality assumption + 1 year	66,000	95,000
Mortality assumption - 1 year	(65,000)	(93,000)
CPI rate + 0.1%	67,000	89,000
CPI rate - 0.1%	(66,000)	(87,000)

**Defined benefit pension scheme net asset**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Scheme assets	5,615,000	5,117,000
Scheme obligations	(3,694,000)	(4,380,000)
Net asset	1,921,000	737,000
Restriction on scheme assets	(1,921,000)	(737,000)
Total liability recognised	-	-

**The Academy Trust's share of the assets in the scheme**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>Fair value</b>	<b>Fair value</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Equities	2,533,000	2,441,000
Government bonds	6,000	5,000
Other bonds	11,000	5,000
Cash/liquidity	168,000	72,000
Property	466,000	435,000
Other assets	2,431,000	2,159,000
Total market value of assets	5,615,000	5,117,000
Restriction on scheme assets	(1,921,000)	(737,000)
Net assets recognised	3,694,000	4,380,000

The actual return on scheme assets was £339,000 (2024: £348,000).



**ZEST ACADEMY TRUST****NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****19 Pension and similar obligations****(Continued)**

<b>Amount recognised in the statement of financial activities</b>	<b>2025 £</b>	<b>2024 £</b>
Current service cost	175,000	165,000
Interest income	(260,000)	(248,000)
Interest cost	219,000	209,000
Administration expenses	7,000	7,000
Total amount recognised	141,000	133,000
<b>Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations</b>	<b>2025 £</b>	<b>2024 £</b>
At 1 September 2024	4,380,000	4,583,000
Current service cost	175,000	165,000
Interest cost	219,000	209,000
Employee contributions	68,000	67,000
Actuarial gain	(1,035,000)	(564,000)
Benefits paid	(113,000)	(80,000)
At 31 August 2025	3,694,000	4,380,000
<b>Changes in the fair value of the Academy Trust's share of scheme assets</b>	<b>2025 £</b>	<b>2024 £</b>
At 1 September 2024	5,117,000	4,583,000
Interest income	260,000	248,000
Actuarial gain	79,000	100,000
Employer contributions	211,000	206,000
Employee contributions	68,000	67,000
Benefits paid	(113,000)	(80,000)
Effect of non-routine settlements and administration expenses	(7,000)	(7,000)
At 31 August 2025	5,615,000	5,117,000
Restriction on scheme assets	(1,921,000)	(737,000)
Net assets recognised	3,694,000	4,380,000

# ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 19 Pension and similar obligations

(Continued)

The fair value of the pension plan assets at 31 August 2025 is £5,615k, which is £1,921k in excess of the present value of the defined benefit obligation at that date of £3,694k. This surplus of £1,921k is recognised in the financial statements only to the extent that the academy trust can recover that surplus, either through a reduction in future contributions or through a refund to the academy trust.

Following discussions with actuaries and consultations, the academy trust is not able to determine that future contributions will be reduced. It is not possible for the academy trust to receive a refund, as the conditions for this have not been met. Therefore an asset ceiling surplus of £1,921k is not recognised as an asset at 31 August 2025 as the academy trust is not able to determine that the academy trust will benefit from reduced future contributions or by a refund in the foreseeable future.

#### Restriction of pension scheme assets

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

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

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Net expenditure for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)		(442,467)	(320,561)
Adjusted for:			
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income		(10,678)	(10,522)
Investment income receivable	6	(109)	(149)
Defined benefit pension costs less contributions payable	19	(29,000)	(34,000)
Defined benefit pension scheme finance income	19	(41,000)	(39,000)
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets		142,731	146,960
(Increase) in debtors		(89,082)	(34,252)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors		57,894	(33,695)
<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>		<b>(411,711)</b>	<b>(325,219)</b>

#### 21 Analysis of changes in net funds

	1 September 2024 £	Cash flows £	31 August 2025 £
Cash	1,065,198	(411,924)	653,274

## ZEST ACADEMY TRUST

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

#### 22 Long-term commitments

##### Operating leases

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

	2025 £	2024 £
Amounts due within one year	10,481	14,065
Amounts due in two and five years	21,647	22,677
	<u>32,128</u>	<u>36,742</u>

#### 23 Capital commitments

	2025 £	2024 £
Expenditure contracted for but not provided in the financial statements	40,405	-
	<u>40,405</u>	<u>-</u>

#### 24 Related party transactions

Owing to the nature of the Academy Trust's operations and the composition of the Governing Body being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, transactions may take place with organisations in which the academy trust has an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the Academy Trust's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures. The following related party transactions took place in the financial period.

During the year the academy incurred expenditure of:

- £350 (2024: £1,581) with Dimensions Curriculum Limited. The company's director, E Sutton, is a local Governor on the board of Waterloo Primary Academy.

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

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