

Big Life Schools
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st August 2025

Company Number: 07945230

Big Life Schools

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Big Life Schools

Reference and Administration Details for the year ended 31 August 2025

Members	The Big Life Company Taayba Javed Dolly Bedi Richard Scorer Karina Carter Sayeeda Chowdhury Edna Robinson
Trustees	Emma Perry (Chair) Andrea Heffernan Fay Selvan (Representative of the Big Life Company) Philip Trohear Matt Wallis Lisa Brooks Liam McDaid Colin Ralph Sandra Sinclair (resigned 9 July 2025)
Company Secretary	Teresa Chase
Senior Management Team	Principal LCP - Rukhsana Ahmed Principal UCP – Jude Lee Director of Schools and Accounting Officer – Keith Smith Chief Finance Officer – Rebecca Gibbons
Principle and Registered Office	Zion Community Resource Centre 339 Stretford Road Manchester M15 4ZY
Company Registration Number	07945230
Bankers	Santander Bridle Road Bootle, Merseyside, L30 4GB
Auditors	Menzies LLP 4th Floor, 95 Gresham St London EC2V 7AB

Big Life Schools

Trustees' Report

for the year ended 31 August 2025

The trustees 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 under company law.

The trust operates two primary schools in Manchester, Longsight Community Primary (LCP) and Unity Community Primary (UCP). LCP academy has a pupil capacity of 210 and had a roll of 210 at the most recent school census date. In 2024-25, Unity had all two classes in all year groups with a capacity of 420 pupils. At July it had 365 pupils on roll. UCP also operates a nursery with a capacity for 78 full time children. In December 2024, the Trust took on the operational management of the Manchester Sensory Service providing support to children and young people with a hearing or vision need.

Principle Activities

LCP provided a Reception and Years 1-6 class for 210 pupils. Within the school there are 77% of pupils who have English as an additional language. 56% of children were in receipt of Pupil Premium and 15.3% had Special Education Needs.

53.3% of children achieved a 'Good Level of Development at EYFS (GLD) (2024 60%:). 66.7% of children achieved the expected level in the Y1 Phonics check. At the end of KS2 SATs, 67.7% achieved ARE in Reading, 77.4% ARE in Writing, 61.3% ARE in Maths, and 48.4% of the cohort reached a combined ARE. Attendance was 94.3%, just below Manchester average.

Ofsted awarded the school 'Good' on inspection in November 2024.

UCP provided classes for children from Reception to Year 6 with two classes in every year group for the first time. This year we had 128 moves of children in and out of school, a transience rate of 34.9% - the highest since the school has opened. The reason for children leaving is relocation of home address. In addition, the school currently has 81 children (aged 2-4 years) in its nursery. Of the school pupils 77.5% had English as an additional language (EAL). 51.9% of children qualified for Pupil Premium and 21.2% have Special Educational Needs.

Statutory assessments in summer 2025 showed incremental progress. 53.2% of children achieved a Good Level of Development at EYFS. 77.8% of children achieved the expected level in the Y1 Phonics check. At the end of KS2 SATs, 68.3% achieved ARE in Reading. 66.7% achieved ARE in Writing. 66.7% reached ARE in Maths, and 46.7% of the cohort reached combined ARE.

Attendance was 94.5%, which matched national average and is slightly higher than Manchester average. This reflects the concerted work of all staff, including the Family Support Worker, to support families and improve attendance.

Structure, Governance and Management Constitution

The Multi Academy Trust (MAT) 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 Multi Academy Trust. The MAT is part of the Big Life group of social enterprises and charities.

The trustees of Big Life Schools are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of Company Law. The charitable company is known as Big Life Schools.

Details of the trustees who served during the year are included in the Reference and Administrative details on page 3.

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.

Indemnities

The trust through its articles has indemnified its trustees to the fullest extent permissible by law.

Big Life Schools

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 August 2025

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

The recruitment, appointment and election of the trustees is undertaken in accordance with the Articles of Association and the Free School Funding Agreement. The Trust Board currently comprises of 9 Trustees from a range of professional backgrounds and experiences. Trustees are recruited according to their skillsets, experience and ability to contribute to the strategic leadership of the Trust.

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the induction and Training of Trustees

The Training and Induction provided for new Trustees will depend on their existing experience and accordingly when necessary, induction is provided on charity, legal and financial matters. All governors are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets and strategic plans that they will need to undertake their role. The MAT has an active Board development plan which includes briefing sessions, and access to internal and external training. All Trustees receive a Handbook outlining their roles and responsibilities and undertake an annual appraisal with the Chair and have tailored training plans.

Organisational Structure

Trustees are responsible for setting and monitoring the strategic objectives, general policies, budgets and capital expenditure of the Trust.

The Senior Management Team (including the Accounting Officer) as detailed on page 3 implement the policies laid down by the Trustees and report back to them.

In addition, MAT Trustees are further supported by individual school's Local Governing Committees (LGC) that ensure each school's unique character and links with the local community are maintained. The Chair of each LGC is a Board member of the MAT and attends each LGC offering support and guidance. The Governor's role on the LGC is to monitor the individual school's approach to learning and ensure policies are implemented and applied effectively.

Day to day operational management is delegated to the school principal supported by the senior management team.

Governance overview for Big Life Schools is provided through the Big Life Schools Finance Risk and Audit Committee who report directly to the MAT Board.

Arrangements for setting pay of key management personnel

The Trustees of the MAT do not receive remuneration from the Trust.

Key Management Personnel comprise of the Senior Management Team identified on page 3 and include the Principals and the Sensory Service Leads. The rules for determining the pay of Principals are laid down in School Teachers Pay and Conditions document (STPC). The Trustees seek external independent advice as required and benchmark with sector comparable organisations. The pay of the CEO and CFO are set by the Finance Risk and Audit Committee and approved by the MAT Board.

Trade Union Facility Time

Big Life Schools has a Trade Union recognition agreement with all the main teaching and support staff unions. At present we do not have any trade union representatives within school, however we liaise with the unions on a regular basis to ensure that any changes/amends required are consulted with effectively.

Big Life Schools is committed to involving staff in its day to day running and decision making. Staff are supported to take on lead roles including as Health and Safety Representatives and Wellbeing Champions.

Connected Organisations including Related Party Relationships

The MAT operates in partnership and co-operation with the Big Life Company who provide staff and other resources at cost. The Big Life Company is a corporate trustee of Big Life Schools and transactions between these parties are fully disclosed in the notes 21 & 22 to the accounts. In the previous year the Trust (with the support of Tenet) undertook a procurement exercise to ensure value for money in the provision of support services. The Big Life Company were subsequently appointed.

Big Life Schools

Trustees' Report

for the year ended 31 August 2025

Objectives and Activities

Objects and Aims

The objects of Big Life Schools is in accordance with its Articles of Association "to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing a school offering a broad and balanced curriculum."

Our Vision

"Our vision is to change lives and fight inequality by improving the social and educational outcomes of children, and empowering whole families to get to where they want to be"

Big Life Schools began as a vision of local parents in Longsight and will always have parents and children leading the growth of the school. They will be involved in all aspects of the school community, their views will be listened to and valued.

Big Life Schools have a strong focus on language and communication and working with families to ensure children are confident communicators from an early age. We will celebrate and value all languages and recognise that communication and language is the foundation of children's attainment.

- Outstanding: We provide aspirational teaching and learning, helping all children to reach their full potential.
- Inclusive: We welcome and celebrate the lives of children and families from all backgrounds and faiths. We cater for diverse educational needs
- Continuity: We support children and families throughout their lives by supporting continuous learning and providing a smooth transition through children's centres, nurseries and school.
- Focused on Language and communication: Language and communication underpins our curriculum to ensure the best outcomes for children.
- Involve parents and carers: We take every opportunity to place parents and carers at the heart of our schools, and maximise their involvement in their child's education.
- Connected to our communities: We create schools that benefit our children, their families and the whole community, offering training, volunteering and employment opportunities.
- Promote wellbeing: We promote and deliver wellbeing initiatives to benefit children and the whole family. We believe excellent teaching, emotional and mental wellbeing lead to the best start in life for children. We always have the highest educational aspirations and employ staff committed to achieving this for our children. We have developed a bespoke emotional wellbeing programme for our children and families (with Manchester University) which builds resilience.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have given due consideration to Charity Commission published guidance on the operation of the public benefit requirement. The trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance provided by the Charities Commission.

Strategic report

Achievements and Performance - MAT

The MAT has invested in resources to support schools to continue to develop their Teaching and Learning pedagogy. This Plus One model was embedded this year, supporting the curriculum development. This year LCP became a Centre of Excellence for Voice 21 Oracy, and this is now being rolled out to UCP. The MAT have brought in additional support from a partner school to address areas identified by Ofsted in their last assessment of UCP and as a consequence have received assurance from external Quality Assurance. A continued focus from the MAT is maintaining compliance with funding and statutory requirements, whilst continuing to support schools to make progress in all areas of school life.

Big Life Schools

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 August 2025

Achievements and Performance - Longsight Community Primary (LCP)

Longsight Community Primary completed its 12th full year as a school with 210 pupils on the roll and its main achievements during the year were

- Ofsted confirmed 'Good' rating
- Children overall have made excellent progress across core subjects, in particular bridging the gap to national and Manchester.
- We achieved Voice 21 Oracy Centre of Excellence, following a few years embedding practice, demonstrating the importance of oracy skills across the school. This has resulted in the school gaining significant profile across the locality and Northwest as one of only a few schools to have achieved this status.
- Effective coaching model has played a pivotal role in embedding effective teaching
- Year 6 writing results represent our highest performance to date and surpass national averages, reflecting the impact of our focused teaching and learning strategies
- Succession planning has proven highly effective, with a TA4 successfully progressing onto a teacher apprenticeship pathway and set to lead our Year 2 class next year.

Key Challenges

- Budget remains a challenge due to increasing costs.
- We are exploring an increase in staff resources to ensure we continue to meet the growing SEND need across our pupil cohort.
- High level of SEN coming through early years.
- Transience due to housing issues. The demographic of Longsight is changing. The high number of FSM (91 pupils – 44%) is showing that the level of poverty in Longsight is increasing significantly.

LCP Key Priorities for 2025/26

LCP priorities for next year are noted in the table below:

Quality of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve outcomes in Reading, Writing and Maths and Early Years Outcomes to be in line with National Standards• To systematically review and refine the curriculum to ensure alignment with national standards, progression of skills, retention of knowledge and relevance to pupil needs.• To enhance the effectiveness of Continuous Provision in Early Years by developing and embedding high-quality outdoor learning opportunities.• To further develop and refine the Early Years provision map to ensure it clearly identifies and supports the needs of all children.• To improve language and communication outcomes for Early Years pupils• To strengthen pupils' mathematical fluency and problem-solving skills through the consistent implementation of the <i>Mastering Number</i> approach.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop pupils' oracy skills by embedding the approach of "Speak like a specialist," enabling children to articulate subject-specific vocabulary confidently and accurately across the curriculum.• Ensure that SEND provision is precisely matched to the individual needs of children, enabling equitable access to the curriculum and improved outcomes for all.• To enhance oracy skills in pupils with SEND by implementing targeted interventions and inclusive classroom strategies, with progress monitored through observational assessments and pupil voice.
Personal Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To improve attendance and reduce persistent absence through the implementation of the updated Attendance legislation.• To ensure that the outdoor provision for all children leads to high engagement, a quality experience and consistently good behaviour during play.• To increase opportunities for structured debate and discussion by embedding the Debate Mate programme across the curriculum, fostering critical thinking, confidence, and effective communication skills.• To enrich the curriculum by increasing the number and diversity of external visitors in RE and STEM, providing pupils with real-world insights and inspiring engagement through expert-led experiences.• To strengthen pupil voice and personal development by expanding and empowering a range of pupil leadership groups.• Broaden the personal development offer by increasing access to enrichment opportunities, including participation in sports competitions, and engagement with external visitors• Promote pupil advocacy and rights-based education by developing and showcasing RRSA (Rights Respecting Schools Award) campaigning across the school and beyond.
Leadership and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that all school governors have clearly defined link roles (e.g., safeguarding, SEND, curriculum areas) and are actively engaged with the school community.• Continue to raise the profile of the school by actively promoting our work as an Oracy Centre of Excellence and through our commitment to the Rights Respecting Schools Award.• Develop and implement a whole-school sustainability plan, ensuring that agreed sustainability targets are met and regularly reviewed.

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Staff Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To embed a clear understanding of effective Early Years practice for support staff. • To strengthen subject knowledge for KS2 support staff, enhancing instructional strategies, and improving pupil outcomes in mathematics • Integrate the use of AI tools to enhance teaching, learning, and administrative efficiency, with a focus on staff training, curriculum enrichment, and responsible digital literacy. • To ensure that all subject leaders have access to subject training and develop their skills to link in with wider school leadership. • Deliver high-quality teaching and learning-focused training aimed at enhancing classroom practice, pedagogy, and staff professional development. • To focus on talent management and leadership development—identifying, nurturing, and coaching the next generation of leaders to ensure strong and sustainable leadership.
Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign the use of school spaces to maximise functionality, support inclusive and flexible learning environments, and enhance staff collaboration and pupil wellbeing. • Celebrate and promote the school's achievements in Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) and Oracy CoE by embedding recognition across the curriculum, displays, and rights-based learning. • Refine the Treehouse space and transition space to create a supportive, inclusive learning environment enabling children to thrive and engage fully in their learning.
Parents and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen parental engagement by using parent voice to inform the planning and delivery of workshops, ensuring they are relevant, responsive, and supportive of family and pupil needs. • Strengthen collaboration with the Family Hub by establishing termly meetings with Family Hub leads and aligning the school's offer with the wider support services available to families.

Achievements and Performance - Unity Community Primary (UCP)

Unity has completed its tenth year with 365 pupils on roll, and its main achievements were:

- Positive statutory assessment results
- At national average attendance
- Introduction of Relational Circles
- Improved communication with parents through Instagram and relaunched Facebook page
- 35 of the 49 children came to Reception from Unity Nursery

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- A full complement of staff
- School council members elected for each class; Head Boy and Girl appointed and first school council meeting held
- Educational visits to church, mosque, fire station, and Ghyll Head residential
- Strong parent engagement through meet the staff, coffee mornings, workshops, international day, afterschool activities

Key Challenges were;

- Increasing level of SEND need and lack of funds for increased interventions
- High levels of transience
- New Ofsted framework – preparing for imminent inspection

UCP Key Priorities for 2025/26

UCP priorities for next year are noted in the table below

Quality of Education	<p>Enhance the quality of teaching and curriculum and thereby raise standards through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• developing pupils spoken English through a good oracy approach• reviewing the History and Geography curriculums• refining adaptive approaches for SEN in each subject and class• providing good CPD• enhancing the quality of continuous provision in the EYFS through high quality interactions focussing on the needs identified in assessments and baseline.• Raise attainment in all areas – focus on writing and maths. Target and track constant cohort.• Review History and Geography Curriculum• Develop Oracy through Voice 21 work• Develop adaptive teaching practices to meet the increasing SEN need• Ensure compliance with 2025 EY Framework• Implement new writing framework guidance for EYFS• Raise attainment across the EYFS• Implement the ShREC approach and improve adult interactions so that practice is consistent.• Ensure provision for SEND children is consistently good including in the Hive.
Personal Development, Behaviour and Engagement	<p>Improve the provision for pupils' good personal development, behaviour and engagement by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• introducing relational circles• continuing to improve the rate of attendance• continuing to proactively address any discriminatory language and behaviour.• developing careers education and raising aspiration• Raise whole school attendance, reduce PA levels and lateness• Introduce Relational Circles• Revisit the behaviour system.• Continue work on understanding of bullying and discriminatory behaviours• Increase aspirations and awareness of different careers

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for the year ended 31 August 2025

Leadership and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen capacity in leadership through further developing the role of the phase leader, governors and subject leaders • To strengthen governor links which support the school through regular visits and quality assurance. • Increase social media presence to market school to increase class sizes • Refine onboarding processes for staff and pupils
Staff Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of AI • Adaptive teaching • Achieve Belonging matters charter mark • Oracy – Voice 21 training
School Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Sustainability plan • Developing school building/grounds • Review and develop IT infrastructure
Parents and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase physical activity with families and workshops with parents to address obesity • Develop links with local schools and other organisations • Develop Parent Voice

Performance Indicators

The Trustees consider the following as key performance indicators for the schools and nursery:

- Quality of Education
 - Achievement of ARE across the statutory testing (phonics, Multiplication check, KS2), compared to national.
 - Commence delivery of EYFS curriculum reviewing for impact
- Quality assurance
 - Quality calendars in place and delivered to ensure oversight of T&L quality and feedback.
 - Quality framework and compliance with range of self-assessments, internal and external audits to comply with ATH.
- Engagement
 - completion of parental, pupil and staff surveys and analyse feedback for trends, gaps.
- Governance
 - Monitor governor and Trustee visits to schools across the academic year.
- Student Numbers
 - Funding is dependent on student numbers and is monitored as part of internal financial reporting.
- Ofsted: grading as a measurement of current achievement and Improvements for the future
 - Latest Ofsted reports have graded LCP as Good and UCP as RI. Both schools to achieve Good in the next Ofsted grading due in 24-25.
- Growth
 - BLS to explore potential growth opportunities.
- Capital Improvements:
 - Invest in development of buildings, playgrounds and Digital infrastructure, with a focus on sustainability.
- Attendance and Transience
 - Monitoring of attendance is robust and in line with new national guidance, achieving attendance in line with national averages.
- Play Schemes
 - Secure funding to deliver playschemes across both schools
- People and Partners

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Trustees' Report

for the year ended 31 August 2025

- Improve wellbeing of staff as demonstrated through improvement in staff wellbeing surveys.
- Continue to refine and update induction and onboarding of new employees.
- Monitoring and compliance of the Single Central register
- Monitoring and reporting on the number and level of support provided to pupils with SEND
-

The Trustees consider the following as key performance indicators for the Sensory Service:

Referrals

- Monitoring of referrals and time taken to process/contact. (within)10 days
- What phase of education pupils referred into the service are in when referred
- No. of newborn hearing screening completed within the national guidelines
- Initial advice sent to families within 20 working days of referral

Caseload Management

- Monitoring of caseload numbers across the service identifying if pupils are taught or monitored
- Monitoring of pupil level of impairment for both deaf or hearing needs and visual impairment.

DHN

- Monitoring and testing of radio aids for children and young people who need them to ensure access to education

Training

- Training delivered across the city to variety of stakeholders
- % of training reporting positive impact on their practice or ability to support pupils, including general awareness.

Pupil Progress

- Monitoring and reporting of pupil progress against the Deaf and Hearing needs and visual impairment curriculum frameworks
- Monitoring and reporting of pupil's language development for pupils with a deaf or hearing need

Going Concern

Longsight Community Primary completed its twelfth full year as a school with small loss in the year. Unity Community Primary completed its tenth full year as an operating school and made a small surplus. Based on current results and planned budgets the Trustees are of the opinion that both schools of Big Life Schools have adequate resources to continue for the foreseeable future. For this reason, it has adopted the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

Financial Review

Big Life Schools is made up of two schools Longsight Community Primary (LCP) and Community Primary (UCP). In December 2024, BLS took on responsibility for the Manchester Sensory Service Total income for the year amounted to £7,295,000 (2024: £4,470,000) the increase in income mainly due to the additional income for the Manchester Sensory Service.

The loss on operations (excluding fixed asset funds) for the year was £115k (2024: £69k surplus).

The deficit for the year on Fixed Asset Funds was £79k (2024: £167k).

The valuation of the defined benefit pension scheme is now an asset, but this has not been included in the accounts.

The Balance Sheet shows net assets of £7,999,000 (2024: £8,193,000).

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Trustees' Report

for the year ended 31 August 2025

Reserves Policy

The aim of Reserves is to:

- Reduce the risks to delivery and operations should Income levels fall for a period.
- Allow entry into new projects and initiatives that require investment, be paid in arrears or that may not be profitable in the early periods.

Reserve level

The Trust has accumulated restricted reserves and a small level of unrestricted reserves as shown on the Balance Sheet. A reasonable reserves level is an aim of the Trust to allow its schools to respond to the changing needs of its pupils and the environment. Reserves are also held to maintain the capital assets of the company when required. The Trust has reviewed its target reserves and set a current target for free reserves of £589,000. The Trust continuously reviews its budgets and forecasts and is working towards achieving the target level of reserves. The year-end level of free reserves (excluding fixed asset reserves and pension deficit) at the year-end was £462,000 (2024: £577,000).

Investment Policy

At the year-end Big Life Schools has a current account and a reserve account which generates interest. The overriding policy is to ensure that funds are available when required to ensure that liabilities are met when due.

Financial and Risk Management Objectives and Policies

Big Life Schools reviews its strategic, financial, operational and people risks on a regular basis throughout the year. The management, Committees and Board all identify and manage risks and contribute to the Risk register and the management of risk. The Risk Register identifies the key risks, the likelihood of those risks occurring, their potential impact on Longsight Community Primary and Unity Community Primary, Unity Nursery and the Manchester Sensory Service, the actions taken to date and actions to be taken. Risks are prioritised using a consistent scoring system.

Risk Management

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which Big Life Schools be exposed, in particular those related to the operation and finances and are satisfied that there are systems in place to mitigate any exposure to major risks. A formal review of Risk management is undertaken on a regular basis and the key controls used by the multi academy Trust include:

- Formal agendas for all committee and board activity;
- Terms of reference for all committees;
- Comprehensive planning, budgeting and management reporting;
- An organisational structure with clear lines of reporting;
- Formal written policies;
- Clear authorisation and approval levels; and
- Vetting procedures as required by law for the protection of the vulnerable.

Principle Risks and Uncertainties

The schools' principle risks are concerned with the delivery of education services for its pupils. The trustees have identified the principle risks as follows:

- Improve overall attendance
- Achieving educational outcomes in classes with high transience
- The need to grow the MAT
- Attracting and retaining skilled teaching staff in future periods
- Inflationary Pressures (Pay and Non-Pay)
- Cyber Security
- Ensuring both schools achieve and maintain Ofsted grade of at minimum "expected standard" in all areas' ratings.
- Monitoring local authority pension and inflationary budget passthrough from central government to meet expected budgets.

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for the year ended 31 August 2025

All risks including these principle risks and uncertainties are reviewed at each Governors' meeting.

Fundraising

The school does not undertake any major fundraising activity.

Plans for Future Periods

The plan for future periods is to continue to build on the good standards established at both schools and includes:

- Growth of UCP towards its full capacity of 420 pupils.
- Achieve "Expected Standard" at minimum in all areas of Ofsted grading for both schools.
- Developing partnerships with potential convertor schools.
- Establishing and embedding the Sensory Service Steering group
- Securing additional contracts for service delivery

Auditor

The auditors for 2025-26 will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

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

By order of the board of trustees on 20 November 2025 the trustees' report, incorporating the strategic report, has been approved by:



Andrea Heffernan
Trustee

Date: 20/11/2025

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Governance Statement

for the year ended 31 August 2025

Scope of Responsibility

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

As trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in the DfE's Governance Handbook and Competency Framework for Governance.

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the 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 Big Life Schools and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The Information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has formally met four times during the year with two additional special meetings being held. Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Multi Academy Trust

MAT Trustees formally met five times during the year, one of these occasions was a special meeting held to approve the 2022/23 annual report and accounts. In addition, the Local School Governors Boards (which included at least one MAT Trustee) also met 4 times to support effective oversight of funds through regular reporting and communication with the Board members.

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

MAT	Name	Number of meetings attended	Out of possible meetings
	Fay Selvan	3	4
	Emma Perry (Chair)	4	4
	Andrea Heffernan	2	4
	Phil Trohear	3	4
	Matt Wallis	4	4
	Liam McDaid	0	4
	Sandra Sinclair (resigned 9 July 2025)	2	3
	Lisa Brooks	4	4
	Colin Ralph	4	4

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Governance Statement for the year ended 31 August 2025

Governance (continued)

Local Governing Committees

The Local Governing Committees School's Board of Governors formally met four times during the year and Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Governors was as follows:

Longsight Community Primary

LCP	Name	Number of meetings of attended	Out of possible meetings
	Liam McDaid (Chair)	4	4
	Alia Ali-Beag	2	4
	Sandra Saleh	3	4
	Jenna Saide	2	4
	David Grimes	3	4
	Amina Ahmed	4	4
	Lauren Killen (appointed 2 April 2025)	2	2
Natalie Dunne (resigned 31 March 2025)	1	2	

Unity Community Primary

UCP	Name	Number of meetings of attended	Out of possible meetings
	Matt Wallis (Chair)	4	4
	Ben Cook	4	4
	Nia Simpson (resigned 6 Feb 2025)	2	2
	Shaun Jackson	4	4
	Olayemi Sola-Oluleye	3	4
	Ehab Gusbi	4	4
	Dominic Taylor (appointed 17 December 2024)	3	3
	Bhakti Joshi (appointed 8 May 2025)	2	2
	Rodo Abdi (appointed 8 May 2025)	2	2

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Governance Statement

for the year ended 31 August 2025

Review of Value for Money

The Accounting Officer has responsibility for ensuring that the MAT 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 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:

- Improving educational outcomes of its students whilst operating within the financial constraints of the budget.
- Increasing collaboration between its academies, both educationally and financially, and the trust generating savings by negotiating trust wide contracts.
- Maximising third party income for its academies.
- Robust governance and oversight of Academy finances:

The Multi Academy Trusts' Directors are committed to ensuring that governance of the Multi Academy Trust's financial management is robust. The Directors and each Local Governing Body are cognisant of their responsibilities in ensuring that the Academy Trust resources are managed effectively, to support the objectives in the Multi Academy Trusts' Development Plan, whilst considering the long-term development of the Multi Academy Trust. Directors, Governors, Senior Leadership Teams and staff strive for the best possible outcomes for pupils, achieved at reasonable cost.

A qualified finance team provide assurance over the suitability of, and compliance with, financial systems and controls. Its purpose is ensuring that Big Life Schools has a high-quality staff team and operates efficient and effective management of its financial resources. It is responsible for

- Setting budgets and monitoring financial performance
- Approving financial policies and procedures

All Directors, Governors and senior leaders are required to complete a Register of Pecuniary Interests form annually. The opportunity to declare any pecuniary interests is provided at all governors' meetings. The MAT takes a prudent approach to expenditure and has an embedded Scheme of Delegation and Financial Procedures that are supported by a formal purchase order system (eReqs) to ensure that all expenditure is within appropriate limits. Budgets are developed using Integrated curriculum and financial planning principles including assumptions taken from the ASCL.

For both schools staffing structures are regularly reviewed in the year to ensure that they were fit for purpose and appropriate to the changing needs of its pupils and respond to support the attainment objectives of the MAT. The Sensory Service staffing structure was reviewed as part of the TUPE and transfer of management.

The MAT has a high proportion of skilled and experienced teaching and associate staff, who are very effectively deployed to provide best value. Teachers' performance management Governance Statement and support staff appraisal systems are in place, and HR policies, such as Managing Absence, Whistleblowing are implemented.

The MAT's payroll is operated by the Big Life Company Ltd and detailed monthly reconciliations of payroll are undertaken by the Chief Financial Officer to ensure that payments to staff are correct.

Each school has an on- site schools business manager and takes advantage of its corporate membership position with The Big Life Company. The schools have a service level agreement with Big Life Company to provide financial expertise, establish procedures and ensure robust internal control. The services provided by Big Life Company are at cost and it is viewed by the Trust as most cost-effective way to manage the finances of the academy. Last year we awarded Big Life Company the contract to oversee these services for the next 3 years, following a competitive procurement route, managed by TENET.

Individual budget holders are held accountable for the use of their budgets and are helped by experienced accountants in sourcing best value.

Big Life Schools

Governance Statement

for the year ended 31 August 2025

The MAT is a member of a local cluster group of schools and can procure such services as Speech and Language Therapy as a group making significant savings. For services such as catering, cleaning and caretaking Big Life Schools joined the Big Life group to negotiate contracts as part of a larger agreement thus obtaining economies of scale. Full written quotes from several suppliers were obtained before any contract was agreed.

For all purchases over £5,000, Finance were able to review, obtain sufficient information and challenge the accounting officer for all significant expenditure requests before approval to ensure that an assessment of cost and benefits were duly considered. All purchases under £5,000 should be chosen from a list of approved suppliers.

Assessing value for money

The MAT is committed to providing a high quality, inclusive education for all. Through regular assessment we have a clear picture of the potential and progress of every student and provide support and extension work for those students for who it is required. Pupils that receive pupil premium are clearly identified and their individual performance reviewed to ensure that progress attainment is achieved.

The Chief Finance Officer scrutinises the academy's budget forecast, ensuring that it complies with agreed policies and procedures, whilst challenging on spending.

Departmental and curriculum allocations are allocated to specifically meet day to day needs, thus ensuring that significant expenditure remains within the control of senior management. Careful and prudent management of financial resources has ensured that the annual expenditure budget remains within the total income received for the year.

Governance Review – Effectiveness

The MAT assesses its effectiveness on an on-going basis by means of conducting annual appraisals of trustees, skills audits and formulating and monitoring Board Development Plan. During the year four new governors for Local Governing Committees were appointed to meet identified skills gaps. Additionally Board Development Plans identified training to be undertaken. Board Strategy and Forward View events were held to further assess and embed the strategic direction of the MAT.

The MAT formally met four times in the year with one additional special meeting to approve the Trusts annual accounts. Local Governing Committees (which report to the MAT board) met four times in the year. Two MAT Trustees are appointed to and Chair the Local Governing Committee. This arrangement ensures that effective oversight of funds and resources is achieved. The Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC) met four times during the year. The FRAC is attended by four Trustees and is Chaired by Andrea Heffernan. The CEO / Accounting Officer and CFO attend these meetings to provide information and advice to the Committee.

The MAT has reviewed its governance arrangements for the inclusion of the Sensory Service. A new Advisory Board will be established, engaging people with lived experience, parents/carers and professionals to provide input into the service and provide additional monitoring of performance. The CEO will provide reports to the MAT Trustees on agreed KPIs. The CFO will provide financial reports.

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 multi 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 Big Life Schools for the year 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 on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks that has been in place for the year to 31 August 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Big Life Schools

Governance Statement

for the year ended 31 August 2025

The Risk and Control Framework

The Multi 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 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.

The board of trustees considered the need for a specific internal audit function and as required by the ESFA appointed an external company, Red-Rambler Ltd to perform an agreed programme of internal scrutiny work. Red-Rambler Ltd report to the Board (through the Audit and Risk Committee) on completion of their work. On an annual basis Red Rambler Ltd prepare an annual report outlining key findings, recommendations and conclusions.

For 2024-25 the internal scrutiny work included performing a range of checks on the academy trust's systems. In particular, the work carried out in 2024/25 covered GDPR and Budget management.. The internal scrutiny work concluded there were no items of an urgent nature that required reporting to the Audit Committee and that overall risk was graded as Low.

Review of Effectiveness

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

- the work of the peer reviewer;
- the work of the external and internal auditors; and
- 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 a plan to ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on 20 November 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Andrea Heffernan
Trustee



Keith Smith
Accounting Officer

Big Life Schools
Statement on Regularity, Propriety and Compliance
for the year ended 31 August 2025

As Accounting Officer of Big Life Schools, I have considered my responsibility to notify the academy trust board of trustees and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with EFSA terms and conditions of funding, under the funding agreement in place between the academy trust and the Secretary of State. As part of my consideration, I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academies Trust Handbook 2024.

I confirm that I and the academy trust board of trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the academy trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the academy trust's funding agreement and the Academies Trust Handbook 2024.

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



Keith Smith
Accounting Officer

Date 20th November 25

Big Life Schools

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities for the year ended 31 August 2025

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

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; 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 trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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

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

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 20 November 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Andrea Heffernan
Trustee

Big Life Schools

Independent Auditor's Report

to the Board of Trustees of Big Life Schools

for the year ended 31 August 2025

Big Life School Independent Auditor's Report on the Financial Statements to the Members of Big Life Schools

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Big Life Schools ('the academy trust') for the year ended 31 August 2025, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 August 2025 (including Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2025, the Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 August 2025, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025.

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 income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information. 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

Big Life Schools

Independent Auditor's Report

to the Board of Trustees of Big Life Schools

for the year ended 31 August 2025

- the information given in the Trustees' report, which includes the strategic report and the directors' 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; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities set out on page 18, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the academy trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

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.

Extent to which the Audit was Considered Capable of Detecting Irregularities, Including Fraud

We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and then design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

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

- the senior statutory auditor ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the academy trust through discussion with Trustees and other management, and from our knowledge and experience of the academy sector.
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the academy trust, including the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011, and the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025 and Academy Trust Handbook 2024.
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and inspecting legal correspondence.

Big Life Schools

Independent Auditor's Report to the Board of Trustees of Big Life Schools for the year ended 31 August 2025

- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

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

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud.
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:
- performed analytical procedures on material balances for which robust, substantive analytical procedures have been undertaken to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships.
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions.
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

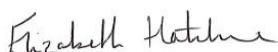
There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance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

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

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

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the academy trust's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the academy trust's members those matters we are required to state to them in an 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 academy trust and the academy trust's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Elizabeth Hatchman ACA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Menzies LLP, Statutory Auditor
4th Floor
95 Gresham Street
London
EC2V 7AB

Date: 02/12/2025

Big Life Schools

Independent Reporting Accountants Assurance Report on Regularity for the year ended 31 August 2025

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 10 November 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 Big Life Schools 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 Big Life Schools 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 Big Life Schools 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 Big Life Schools 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 Big Life Schools and the reporting accountant

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of Big Life School's funding agreements with the Secretary of State for Education dated 20 March 2015 and the Academies Financial 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 year 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 Accountants of Academy Trusts issued by 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.

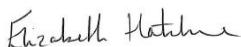
Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity and propriety of the academy trust's income and expenditure.

The work undertaken to draw our conclusions includes:

- Review and testing of financial systems of internal control
- Sample testing of transactions
- Discussions with management

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.



Elizabeth Hatchman BSc, ACA
Reporting Accountant
Menzies LLP

Date: 02/12/2025

Big Life Schools
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 August 2025

		Unrestricted funds Note	Restricted General Funds £'000	Restricted Fixed Asset Funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	2	-	-	28	28	21
Bank interest		16	-	-	16	2
<i>Charitable activities:</i>						
Funding for the academy trust's educational operations	3	124	6,894	-	7,018	4,447
Total		140	6,894	28	7,062	4,470
Expenditure on:						
<i>Charitable activities:</i>						
Academy trust educational operations	4,5	117	6,948	191	7,256	4,611
Total	4,5	117	6,948	191	7,256	4,611
Net (expenditure)/income		23	(54)	(163)	(194)	(141)
Transfers between funds	12	-	(84)	84	-	-
Other recognised gains and losses						
Actuarial gain/(loss) on defined benefit pension schemes	12, 20	-	-	-	-	43
Net movement in funds		23	(138)	(79)	(194)	(98)
Reconciliation of funds						
Net movement in funds		23	(138)	(79)	(194)	(98)
Total funds brought forward at 1 September 2024	12	236	341	7,616	8,193	8,291
Total funds carried forward at 31 August 2025		259	203	7,537	7,999	8,193

All of the academy trust's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two financial periods.

The notes on pages 29 to 49 form part of these accounts.

The comparative SOFA is included in note 24.

Big Life Schools

Balance Sheet

For the year ended 31 August 2025

	Note	2025 £'000	2025 £'000	2024 £'000	2024 £'000
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	9		7,537		7,616
			7,537		7,616
Current assets					
Debtors	10	400		199	
Cash at bank and in hand		497		609	
		897		808	
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11		(435)		(231)
			(435)		(231)
Net current assets			462		577
Total assets less current liabilities			7,999		8,193
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	20		-		-
			-		-
Total net assets			7,999		8,193
			7,999		8,193
Funds of the academy trust					
Restricted funds					
Fixed asset fund	12	7,537		7,616	
Restricted income fund	12	203		341	
Pension reserve	12	-		-	
		-		-	
Total restricted funds			7,740		7,957
Unrestricted income funds	12		259		236
			259		236
Total funds			7,999		8,193
			7,999		8,193

The financial statements on pages 26 to 49 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 20 November 2025 and are signed on their behalf by:



Andrea Heffernan
Trustee

Big Life Schools
Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended 31 August 2025

	Note	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	16	(28)	(241)
Cash flows from investing activities	17	(84)	(2)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		<hr/> (112)	<hr/> (243)
 Cash and cash equivalents at 1 September 2024		<hr/> 609	<hr/> 852
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 August 2025	18	<hr/> 497	<hr/> 609

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

1. Accounting Policies

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

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements of the academy trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS102, have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (Charities SORP (FRS102)), the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

Big Life Schools meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

Going Concern

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

Income

All 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 Receivable**

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 entitlement of receipt its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

General Annual Grant is recognised in full in the Statement of Financial Activities in the year for which it is receivable and any abatement in respect of the period is deducted from income and recognised as a liability.

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

- **Donations**

Donations are recognised on a receivable basis (where there are no performance-related conditions) where the academy trust has 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.

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

Expenditure

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

- 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.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Assets costing £3,000 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 leasehold 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	125 years
• Long leasehold buildings	50 years
• Furniture and equipment	4 years
• Computer equipment	4 years

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.

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

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.

Provisions

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

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

Leased Assets

Rentals under operating leases are charged on monthly basis over the lease term.

Financial instruments

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

Financial assets – trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 10. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

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

Financial liabilities – trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 11. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition. Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument.

Taxation

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

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.

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

The TPS is an unfunded scheme, and contributions are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the academy trust in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by Government Actuary on the basis of quadrennial valuations using a prospective unit credit method. As stated in note 20, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer scheme with no underlying assets to assign between employers. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution scheme for accounting purposes and the contributions recognised in the period to which they relate.

The LGPS is a funded scheme, and the assets are held separately from those of the academy trust in separate trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred.

Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in other recognised gains and losses.

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

Fund Accounting

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

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

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

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

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

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

1. Accounting Policies (continued)

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement (continued)

- Local Government Pension Scheme

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 20, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 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.

- Tangible fixed assets (see note 9)

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated over their useful lives, taking into account residual values, where appropriate. The actual lives of the assets and residual values are assessed annually and may vary depending on a number of factors. In re-assessing asset lives, factors such as technological innovation, product life cycles and maintenance programmes are taken into account. Residual value assessments consider issues such as future market conditions, the remaining life of the asset and projected disposal values.

Critical areas of judgement

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees have made the following judgements:

- Determine whether there are indicators of impairment of the group's tangible assets. Factors taken into consideration in reaching such a decision include the economic viability and expected future financial performance of the asset and where it is a component of a larger cash-generating unit, the viability and expected future performance of that unit.

The main critical areas relating to the financial statements are the overall profitability, the management of net current assets, the fixed assets value and during the year the management of financial matters within budget agreed by the Trustees. The year-end has resulted in a minor deficit for the year but maintained a positive net current assets position throughout the year to ensure that creditors are paid when due. The fixed assets position reflects the addition of the new school building and the depreciation of assets over their useful lives. Close performance against budget is monitored by management on a monthly basis and reported to the Trustees.

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

2. Donations and Capital Grants

	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Capital grants	28	28	21
TOTAL	20	20	21

3. Funding for the Academy Trust's Educational Operations

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
DfE / ESFA revenue grants				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	3,340	3,340	3,020
Pupil Premium	-	370	370	289
Other DfE / ESFA Grants	-	369	369	567
	-	4,079	4,079	3,876
Other government grants				
Local Authority Grants	-	2,395	2,395	188
	-	2,395	2,395	188
Other income from the academy trust's educational operations	124	420	544	383
	124	420	544	383
TOTAL INCOME	124	6,894	7,018	4,447
	124	6,894	7,018	4,447

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

4. Expenditure

	Staff Costs £'000	Non-Pay Expenditure		Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
		Premises £'000	Other £'000		
Academy Trust educational operations:					
• Direct costs	5,355	337	955	6,647	4,261
• Allocated support costs	396	3	210	609	350
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	5,751	340	1,165	7,256	4,611
Net income/(expenditure) for the period includes:					
				Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Depreciation				191	188
Fees payable to auditor for:					
• Audit				23	15
• Non-audit				1	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

5. Charitable Activities

		Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Direct costs – educational operations		6,647	4,261
Support costs – educational operations		609	350
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	7,256	4,611	
Analysis of support costs:			
		Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Support staff costs		396	207
Other support costs		186	113
Governance Costs		27	30
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total support costs	609	350	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

5. Charitable Activities (continued)

Total cost analysis by Academy

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

	Teaching and Educational Support Staff Costs 2025 £'000	Other Support Staff Costs 2025 £'000	Educational Supplies 2025 £'000	Other Costs (excl Dep'n) 2025 £'000	Total Costs 2025 £'000
Longsight Community Primary	1,184	60	71	279	1,594
Unity Community Primary	1,986	76	113	456	2,631
Big Life Schools Trust	2,185	260	35	360	2,840
Total	5,355	396	219	1,095	7,065

	Teaching and Educational Support Staff Costs 2024 £'000	Other Support Staff Costs 2024 £'000	Educational Supplies 2024 £'000	Other Costs (excl Dep'n) 2024 £'000	Total Costs 2024 £'000
Longsight Community Primary	1,040	57	52	266	1,415
Unity Community Primary	1,728	72	94	407	2,301
Big Life Schools Trust	367	78	8	254	707
Total	3,135	207	154	927	4,423

6. Staff

a. Staff costs

Staff costs during the period were:	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Wages and salaries	4,402	2,629
Social security costs	441	218
Operating costs of defined benefit pension schemes	864	444
	5,707	3,291
Supply staff costs	44	51
	5,751	3,342

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

6. Staff (continued)

b. Staff numbers

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

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Teachers	41	32
Administrations and support	80	65
Management	4	3
	<hr/> 125	<hr/> 100

The average number of persons employed by the academy during the period expressed as full-time equivalents (35 hours per week) was as follows:

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Teachers	38	29
Administrations and educational support	68	52
Management	4	3
	<hr/> 110	<hr/> 84

c. Higher paid staff

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

	2025 No.	2024 No.
£60,000 - £70,000	6	2
£70,000 - £80,000	-	-
£80,000 - £90,000	3	3
	<hr/> 9	<hr/> 5

d. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the academy trust comprise the trustees and the senior management as listed on page 3. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension and national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the academy trust was £399,884 (2024: £383,730).

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

7. Related party transactions – Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year ended 31 August 2025, £nil remuneration was paid to the trustees and travel and subsistence expenses totalling £0 (2024: £0) was paid to no trustees.

8. Trustees and officer insurance

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

9. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Long Leasehold land and buildings £'000	Furniture and equipment £'000	Computer equipment £'000	Total £'000
Cost				
At 1 September 2024	9,046	390	478	9,914
Additions	30	82	-	112
Disposals	-	-	(468)	(468)
At 31 August 2025	9,076	472	10	9,558
Depreciation				
At 1 September 2024	1,446	376	476	2,298
Charged in year	180	9	2	191
Disposals	-	-	(468)	(468)
At 31 August 2025	1,626	385	10	2,021
Net book values				
At 31 August 2025	7,450	87	-	7,537
At 31 August 2024	7,600	14	2	7,616

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

10. Debtors

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Trade Debtors	283	7
VAT recoverable	44	34
Prepayments and accrued income	73	158
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	400	199
	<hr/>	<hr/>

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Trade creditors	128	65
Other creditors	61	10
Accruals and deferred income	246	156
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	435	231
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Deferred income	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Deferred income at 1 September 2024	102	165
Released from previous years	(584)	(160)
Resources deferred in the period	616	97
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Deferred income at 31 August 2025	134	102
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Deferred income is income received in the reported financial period which is intended for use within a future period. The deferred income balance at the end of the financial year was due to the academy trust holding funds received in advance for School Meals, Pupil Premium, SEN and various grants.

Big Life Schools
Notes forming part of the financial statements
for the year ended 31 August 2025

12. Funds

	Balance at 1 September 2024 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Resources expended £'000	Gains, Losses and Transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2025 £'000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	186	3,340	(3,394)	(84)	48
Pupil Premium	-	370	(370)	-	-
Property Sinking Fund	155	-	-	-	155
Pension reserve	-	-	-	-	-
Other Funds	-	3,184	(3,184)	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	341	6,894	(6,948)	(84)	203
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Restricted fixed asset funds					
DfE/ESFA grants	7,616	28	(191)	84	7,537
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	7,616	28	(191)	84	7,537
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total restricted funds	7,957	6,922	(7,139)	-	7,740
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Unrestricted funds					
Unrestricted funds	236	140	(117)	-	259
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total unrestricted funds	236	140	(117)	-	259
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total funds	8,193	7,062	(7,256)	-	7,999
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

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

- General Annual Grant (GAG) must be used for the normal running costs of the Trust's academies.
- Other restricted funds comprise funds received from the DfE, ESFA, Local Authorities and other government bodies for the use of trust development.
- Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the Academy Trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG that it could carry forward at 31 August 2025.

Big Life Schools
Notes forming part of the financial statements
for the year ended 31 August 2025

12. Funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Resources expended £'000	Gains, Losses and Transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2024 £'000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	137	3,020	(2,971)	-	186
Pupil Premium	-	289	(289)	-	-
Property Sinking Fund	155	-	-	-	155
Pension reserve	-	-	(43)	43	-
Other Funds	-	931	(931)	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	292	4,240	(4,234)	43	341
Restricted fixed asset funds					
DfE/ESFA grants	7,783	21	(188)	-	7,616
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	7,783	21	(188)	-	7,616
Total restricted funds	8,075	4,261	(4,422)	43	7,957
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Unrestricted funds					
Unrestricted funds	216	209	(189)	-	236
Total unrestricted funds	216	209	(189)	-	236
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total funds	8,291	4,470	(4,611)	43	8,193
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

12 Funds (continued)

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances were allocated as follows:

	Balance at 31 August 2025 £'000	Balance at 31 August 2024 £'000
Longsight Community Primary	723	684
Unity Community Primary	466	320
Central Services	(754)	(427)
Manchester Sensory Support Service	27	-
Total before fixed assets and pension reserve	462	577
Restricted fixed asset fund	7,537	7,616
Pension Reserve	-	-
	7,999	8,193
	=====	=====

13. Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 August 2025 are represented by:

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted general funds £'000	Restricted fixed asset funds £'000	Total funds £'000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	7,537	7,537
Current assets	259	638	-	897
Current liabilities	-	(435)	-	(435)
Pension scheme liability	-	-	-	-
Total net assets	259	203	7,537	7,999
	=====	=====	=====	=====

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 represented by:

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted general funds £'000	Restricted fixed asset funds £'000	Total funds £'000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	7,616	7,616
Current assets	236	572	-	808
Current liabilities	-	(231)	-	(231)
Pension scheme liability	-	-	-	-
Total net assets	236	341	7,616	8,193
	=====	=====	=====	=====

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

14. Capital Commitments

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Contracted for, but not provided in the financial statements	-	20

15. Long-term commitments, including operating leases

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

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Amounts due within one year	6	4
Amounts due between one and five years	14	13
Amounts due after five years	-	-
	<u>20</u>	<u>17</u>

16. Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash inflow from operating activities

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Net (expenditure)/ income for the reporting period	(194)	(98)
<i>Adjusted for:</i>		
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(28)	(21)
Depreciation (note 9)	191	188
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable (note 20)	-	-
Decrease / (Increase) in debtors	(201)	(98)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors & provisions	204	(212)
 Net cash provided by/(used in) Operating Activities	 (28)	 (241)

17. Cash flows from investing activities

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(112)	(23)
Capital grants from DfE/ESFA	28	21
 Net cash provided by financing activities	 (84)	 (2)

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

18. Analysis of cash

	At 1 September 2024 £'000	Cashflow £'000	At 31 August 2025 £'000
Cash in hand and at bank	609	(112)	497
Total cash outflow and cash equivalents	609	(112)	497

19. Members' liabilities

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

20. Pension and similar obligations

The Trust's employees belong to two principal pension schemes: the Teachers' Pension Scheme England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff; and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff, which is managed by Greater Manchester 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 of the LGPS 31 March 2022.

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

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. Membership is automatic for 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 £2262,000 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 was implemented from 1 April 2024. The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2028.

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the period amounted to £485,000 (2023/24: £284,000).

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

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 scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2025 was £257,000 (2024: £130,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £194,000 (2024: £98,000) and employees' contributions totalled £63,000 (2024: £32,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 18 per cent for employers and between 5.5 to 12.5 per cent for employees.

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

Principal actuarial assumptions	2025	2024
Rate of increase in salaries	3.50%	3.45%
Rate of increase for pensions in payment / inflation (CPI)	2.70%	2.65%
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	6.10%	5.00%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums (pre Apr 08/post Apr 08)	50%	50%

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

	2025	2024
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	20.3	20.0
Females	23.3	23.3
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	21.6	21.4
Females	23.7	23.6

Sensitivity Analysis	2025	2024
	£000	£000
Discount Rate +0.1%	9.5	11
Discount Rate -0.1%	(9.5)	(11)
Mortality Assumptions – 1 year increase	(11.5)	(12)
Mortality Assumptions – 1 year decrease	11.5	12
CPI rate +0.1%	(10)	(12)
CPI rate -0.1%	10	12

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

20. Pension and similar obligations (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

The academy trust's share of the assets and liabilities in the scheme and the expected rates of return were:

	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
Equity instruments	784	602
Debt instruments	205	131
Property	108	70
Cash	108	70
Total market value of assets	1,205	873
Present value of scheme liabilities	(575)	(604)
Effect of the asset ceiling	(630)	-
Surplus/(Deficit) in the scheme	-	269

The actual return on scheme assets was 7.5% (2024: 9.4%).

Amounts recognised in the statement of financial activities

	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
Current service cost (net of employer contributions)	(127)	(66)
Interest income on Assets	50	39
Interest cost on obligations	(35)	(28)
Total operating charge	(112)	(55)

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

	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
At 1 September	604	480
Current service cost	127	66
Interest cost	35	28
Employee contributions	63	32
Actuarial (Gain)/Loss	(254)	(2)
At 31 August	575	604

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

Changes in the fair value of academy trust's share of scheme assets:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
At 1 September	873	674
Interest income	50	39
Employer contributions	194	98
Employee contributions	63	32
Return on assets excluding amounts included in net interest	25	30
Other Experience Remeasures	-	-
At 31 August	1,205	873

Considering the impact of "asset ceiling", both of the schools within the Trust have an asset balance on their defined pension scheme. The assets balances are detailed below:

Longsight Community Primary School - The balance of the net defined pension asset is £0

Unity Community Primary School – The balance of the net defined pension asset is £0

21. Related party transactions

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

The Multi Academy Trust has a Service Level Agreement with the Big Life Company Ltd, The Corporate shareholder of Big Life Schools. In that agreement The Big Life Company supplies specific roles including Group Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and Clerk to the Governors. The agreement also provides for the supply of various central services such as Finance, Legal and Payroll services, Communications and Marketing activity and Clerk to the Governors.

In addition to this the Big Life Company Ltd pays all staff costs and re-charges these costs to the Trust. There is no profit gained from the re-charges made to Big Life Schools.

For 2024/25 all costs amounted to £6,265,000 (2024: £3,539,000) of which the activities relating to the SLA amounted to £97,940 (2024: £97,944) and activities relating to the WEA grant amounted to £12,936 (2024: £0).

As at 31 August 2025 Big Life Company owed £222,191 (2024: £1,901) to Big Life Schools.

As at 31 August 2025 Big Life Schools owed £2,907 (2024: £7,748) to Big Life Company.

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

22. Central Services

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

- Finance
- Legal
- Payroll & HR services
- Communications Marketing and Training
- Time from dedicated and qualified management and Clerk to the Governors.

The trust charges for these services on the following basis:

Flat percentage of 5% of GAG income (2024: 5%) for the primary schools.

Flat percentage of 5% (2024: 5%) of total budgeted income for the nursery.

Flat fee of £2,500 per month (2024: £0) for the Manchester Sensory Support Service.

The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2025	2024
	£000	£000
Longsight Community Primary	72	84
Unity Community Primary	125	117
Unity Nursery	21	18
Manchester Sensory Support Service	23	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	241	219
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The central Academy Trust currently operates on a planned deficit as resources are invested in cross academy projects such as curriculum development and community engagement. As the Trust grows the central trust will break even.

23. Contingent Liability

The Academy Trust is aware of the 2023 ruling in the Virgin Media vs NTL Pension Trustee case and subsequent court of appeal ruling published in July 2024. These ruled that certain amendments made to the NTL Pension Plan were invalid because they were not accompanied by the correct actuarial confirmation. The Department of Work & Pensions has since announced that it will introduce legislation to allow changes to be certified retrospectively and as a result, the Academy Trust no longer believes this to be a contingent liability.

Big Life Schools

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025

24. Comparative SOFA

The SOFA for 2023-24 is shown below

		Unrestricted funds Note	Restricted General Funds £'000	Restricted Fixed Asset Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	2	-	-	21	21	13
Bank Interest		2	-	-	2	-
<i>Charitable activities:</i>						
Funding for the academy trust's educational operations	3	207	4,240	-	4,447	4,011
Total		<hr/> 209	<hr/> 4,240	<hr/> 21	<hr/> 4,470	<hr/> 4,024
Expenditure on:						
<i>Charitable activities:</i>						
Academy trust educational operations	4,5	189	4,234	188	4,611	4,121
Other		<hr/> 189	<hr/> 4,234	<hr/> 188	<hr/> 4,611	<hr/> 4,121
Total	4,5	<hr/> 189	<hr/> 4,234	<hr/> 188	<hr/> 4,611	<hr/> 4,121
Net income/(expenditure)		20	6	(167)	(141)	(97)
Transfers between funds	12	-	-	-	-	-
Other recognised gains and Losses						
Actuarial gain/(loss) on defined Benefit pension schemes	12, 20	-	43	-	43	-
Net movement in funds		<hr/> 20	<hr/> 49	<hr/> (167)	<hr/> (98)	<hr/> (97)