

Report of the Trustees and  
Financial Statements For The Year Ended 31 August 2019  
for  
Link Learning Trust



Allotts Business Services Ltd, Statutory Auditor  
Chartered Accountants  
Sidings Court  
Lakeside  
Doncaster  
South Yorkshire  
DN4 5NU



**Link Learning Trust**

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**For The Year Ended 31 August 2019**

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**Link Learning Trust**

**Reference and Administrative Details**  
**For The Year Ended 31 August 2019**

<b>MEMBERS</b>	I T Williamson Lord K Bradley (resigned 12.9.2019) K J Doyle
<b>TRUSTEES</b>	Lord K Bradley (Chair of Link Learning Trust) (resigned 12.9.2019) S Ferris J Kennedy J M Dean T C N Hilton S Johnson T W Matthews J M E Shuttleworth C A Starbuck A R Young
<b>SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM</b>	J Kennedy (Accounting Officer) S Ferris (Executive team)
<b>REGISTERED OFFICE</b>	Brookburn Primary School Brookburn Road Chorlton - Cum - Hardy Manchester M21 8EH
<b>REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER</b>	10660172 (England and Wales)
<b>AUDITORS</b>	Allotts Business Services Ltd, Statutory Auditor Chartered Accountants Sidings Court Lakeside Doncaster South Yorkshire DN4 5NU
<b>SOLICITORS</b>	Browne Jacobson 18-22 Bridge Street Manchester M3 3BZ
<b>BANKERS</b>	Lloyds Bank Market Street Manchester M1 1PW

## Link Learning Trust

### Report of the Trustees For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

The trustees who are also directors of the charitable company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 August 2019. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Academies Accounts Direction issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the year ended 31st August 2019. This report serves the purpose of both a trustees' report, and a directors' report under company law.

The principal activity of the charitable company is the operation of LINK Learning Trust to provide education for pupils and students of a range of ability between the ages of 2 to 11. This is the primary object of the multi academy trust as set out in paragraph 4 of the articles of association of the company limited by guarantee.

#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **Constitution**

LINK Learning Trust was incorporated on 1st April 2017 as a Multi Academy Trust and commenced its activities on transfer of two primary schools, Brookburn Community Primary School and Barlow Hall Primary School from the Local Authority on 1st April 2017. Both schools are located in Chorlton, Manchester. The Multi Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents of the multi academy trust. The trustees of LINK Learning Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purpose of company law. The charitable company is known as Link Learning trust. The members (which number 3) are chaired by a member who is also Chair of the Trustee Board providing the link between the two boards. The Articles of Association require the members of the Trust to appoint between three and ten Trustees to be responsible for the affairs and the management of the Trust. Details of the Trustees who served throughout the period are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page one.

##### **Members' Liability**

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

##### **Trustees' Indemnities**

The Trust does not purchase separate insurance for Trustees' indemnities as it buys into the Risk Protection Arrangement offered by the Department for Education, which provides appropriate cover for the Trustees' liabilities (to protect Trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Academy business).

##### **Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees**

Trustees are recruited by invitation, dependent upon their expertise, experience and skills. Members may appoint by ordinary resolution up to 7 Trustees as referenced in the Articles of Association and are appointed for a term of 4 years. Terms of office for Trustees of LINK Learning Trust will be staggered, in the first instance, to maintain membership of the board thus ensuring stability in the membership. The Academy trust may also have any number of Co-opted Trustees.

##### **Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees**

The training and induction provided for new Trustees is dependent on their existing experience. Each Trustee will complete a skills audit to ensure a 'best fit' for our Trust requirements. Where necessary, induction will include training on educational, legal and financial matters. All Trustees will be given the opportunity to visit the schools and have the chance to meet with staff and pupils.

All Trustees are also provided with electronic copies of key documents, such as policies, procedures, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents they need to undertake their role. Since there is expected to be only a small number of new Trustees in any year, induction will be tailored specifically to the individual.

##### **Organisational Structure**

The Members board have strategic oversight of the Trust and appoint the Trustees with the general power vested in the Trustees to manage the schools. The Trust Board are responsible for compliance, care and prudence. It manages the business of the Academy Trust and may exercise all the powers of the Academy Trust. The board focuses on the named three core functions of governance, namely:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff.
- Oversee the financial performance of the organisation and make sure its money gives public value.

## Link Learning Trust

### Report of the Trustees For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **Organisational Structure**

In addition, LINK Learning Trustees will also:

- Set vision and policies for LINK Learning Trust and a clear strategy for achieving the vision.
- Ensure high standards of corporate governance are maintained.
- Exercise reasonable skill and care in carrying out its duties.
- Ensure compliance with charity and company law.
- Ensure operation in accordance with funding agreement.
- Create robust accountability for standards

The Trust Board delegates to its Resources Committee responsibility of budget monitoring, risk management and internal and external audit functions. The Trust Board delegates to its Standards Committee the responsibility of monitoring performance and standards in its schools.

The Trust Board is supported by an Executive Management Team consisting of:

- Barlow Hall Primary School Headteacher who acts as the Accounting Officer
- Brookburn Primary School Headteacher, teaching school lead.

The Headteachers are supported by their Senior Leadership Teams and have contracted in this period additional support from the Chorlton Partnership Business Manager. The Trust Board delegates to its Academy Councils the powers to manage the running of individual schools on a day to day basis in conjunction with the Headteachers.

The trustees meet at least each term with the first meeting of each academic year being the AGM. Committees of the Trust will meet at least twice a year and report to the Trust Board. Academy Councils and their committees will also meet on a termly basis and if required, report to the Resources Committee, Standards Committee or the Trust Board for approval in relation to non- delegated matters. Trustees will ensure they fulfil their legal obligation in the Academies Financial handbook of meeting six times per year by way of full trust meetings and Finance and Resources Committee meetings. (At least 3 per year). Accounts monitoring will take place submitting these records to the Chair of the Finance Committee and the Accounting Officer for sign off on a monthly basis.

Roles and responsibilities of Trustees, Governors, Headteachers and other school leaders are clearly defined in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and Financial Policies and Procedures Manual.

##### **Arrangements for Setting Pay and Remuneration of Key Management Personnel**

The Trust Board meets additionally once per year to establish the Teachers' Performance Pay Policy on an annual basis. Pay scales follow the National Teachers Pay and Conditions document as a minimum requirement and additions are made, if warranted, by recommendation to the Trust board for approval. Annual performance management reviews inform pay progression. Recommendations for staff pay are considered at the Trust Board Pay Committee. These recommendations are put forward for ratification to the full Trust Board.

Arrangements for setting performance management targets and remuneration for the Executive Team falls within the auspices of the Trust Board. A performance management review will take place in the autumn term for each member of the Executive Team and be reported to the Trust in their termly autumn meeting for approval.

##### **Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations**

The Trust is linked with Manchester Teaching School Alliance. MTSA forms the school improvement arm of the Trust Board.

##### **Trade Union Facility Time**

There are no employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period.

##### **Risk management**

Every public sector organisation should have systems for identifying and managing risk - both opportunities and threats - suited to its business, circumstances and risk appetite. Every organisation faces a variety of uncertainties, both positive and negative, which can affect its success in delivering its strategic objectives, budget and value for money. For LINK Learning Trust, risk management is a key governance task for the Trust board. The Board have delegated the task of monitoring the Trust's Strategic Risk Register to the Resources Committee and individual Academy Councils also have their own operational risk management processes. Feedback from the operational level informs the strategic Risk Register through the escalation route. Each Academy within LINK Learning Trust also conducts their own individual Risk Assessments, including those for Health & Safety. The Trust actively seeks to recognise both threats and opportunities, and decides how to respond to them, including the setting of internal controls. It takes a strategic view of risk across the Trust, factoring together all the relevant input it can reasonably use. For example, it may consider to what extent risks interact, cumulate or cancel each other out. And consideration of risk should feature in all the board's significant decisions. It may only be at board level that it is really possible to scan the horizon for emerging trends, problems or opportunities that might change the Trust's working environment.

## Link Learning Trust

### Report of the Trustees For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

#### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **Risk management**

###### **Risk Management Model**

1. The board defines the Trust's risk tolerance.
2. The Trust identifies and categorises its risks.
3. The Trust assesses the risks identified: how likely their possible impact, identifying which are beyond tolerance and when.
4. The board scans the horizon for any remote overlooked risks.
5. The board decides which risks matter and what action should be taken, if any.
6. Downward delegation of management, coupled with upward reporting of risks through the Trust enables the board to track performance
7. Using this feedback, the board takes a rounded overview, and may adjust decisions e.g. on tolerance or on response.
8. Back to step 1 and iterate as the board chooses.

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Objectives and Aims**

The Academy Trust's objects are specifically restricted to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum.

Our vision is a world where all children and young people are given the opportunity to thrive, succeed and aspire. Link Learning Trust intends to achieve this through our LINK Vision:

Learning Together  
Inspiring each other  
Nurturing and valuing  
Knowledge that builds futures

The children are at the centre of what everything we do. Every pupil will be supported and challenged. We aim to provide the best possible preparation for our pupils to contribute to society and look for the best in everyone. Our view is that everyone in our organisation will contribute positively to the academy and wider society.

We aim for every child to leave our schools with the essential skills and knowledge they need to contribute effectively and to become well-rounded, confident, happy adults. Our trust's responsibility to education is to provide an environment where all practitioners can collaborate, learn from each other and reflect. Our LINK Vision will help us to achieve this aim.

LINK Learning Trust (LLT) Board have agreed four key strategic business objectives for LLT which will steer our growth and development over the next three years. These are:

1. Educational Strategy and outcomes - Increasing quality of provision from all our schools. Sponsoring and improving schools in need of help and support
2. People and Partners - Leadership and professionalism drives continuous improvement
3. Financial probity - Ensuring a financially viable and sustainable Multi Academy Trust
4. Compliance and risk - Leading and monitoring statutory obligations and compliance to ensure sustainability.

##### **'The Big 5'**

At LINK Learning Trust, the 'big five' performance priorities will drive our schools' improvement and enable us to review and challenge; so we are able to deliver high quality teaching and learning in our schools.

- All children are making at least expected progress
- More children are making better than expected progress year on year
- 100% of teaching is judged as good or better
- Pupil attendance is in line with the national average or higher
- All schools in the trust will become a 'Rights Respecting' School

## Link Learning Trust

### Report of the Trustees For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Objectives and Aims**

##### **Our Values, Mission and Goals**

###### **Our vision -**

Learning together  
Inspiring each other  
Nurturing and valuing  
Knowledge that builds futures

###### **Our mission -**

We provide an inspirational experience that develops imaginative learners who take ownership of their learning, are proud of their achievements, and are prepared for a life in modern Britain.

**Our goals -** parents will want their children to be educated at one of our MAT schools because we:

Develop good citizens  
Ignite learning and develop excellent teaching  
Grow exceptional leaders  
Focus on performance  
Provide public value

###### **Resources**

###### **Our people**

Our people are our most valuable and important asset. We want LINK Learning Trust to support the development of our staff and for working at one of our schools to be career enhancing. We are focused on creating the right working environment so people can give of their best in all that they do, in line with the Trust's values and ways of working.

###### **Our working culture and behaviours**

We are clear about the behaviours we are looking for and reflect these in our ways of working, training and performance management. We value staff feedback through day to day communications and surveys so we can continue to monitor staff engagement and retention issues.

###### **Equality and Diversity**

At Link Learning Trust, we continuously strive to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the Trust, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected with the trust feel proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life.

###### **Objectives, Strategies and Activities**

As a Trust we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age, disability, ethnicity, gender (including issues of transgender, and of maternity and pregnancy), religion and belief, and sexual identity. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

###### **A culture of continuous improvement**

Continuous Improvement for LINK Learning Trust is becoming and remaining the best schools in the best interests of the children, young people and families we serve. We want to constantly improve our position by improving quality, efficiency, innovation, culture, or any other component that is vital to our schools; whilst at the same time recognising that continuous improvement is a significant part of business as usual and not separate from it. To continuously improve there has to be continuous change, but we will not change for the sake of change, instead we will only change when we can clearly articulate the case for it. As a Trust, we have a MAT strategic plan, which is one component of our MAT School Improvement Strategy.

Link Learning Trust  
Report of the Trustees  
For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

**OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**  
**Objectives, Strategies and Activities**

**A culture of continuous improvement**

Our core business is teaching and learning. Whilst effective corporate governance should be enabling of this, it is not an end in itself. Better outcomes for children and young people are the essence of our beliefs. To bring cogency and coherence to our pursuit of ever improving provision, we have published our MAT school improvement strategy, which details how we will be "relentless in our pursuit of ever improving outcomes for all children". Every school in LINK Learning Trust has its own self-evaluation and school improvement plan, which will provide detailed information of the profile of the school and the improvement priorities, which are moving the school forward. The accepted norm for all schools in LINK Learning Trust is that provision is at least good, and is constantly moving forward to be better.

**Using data and information effectively**

We are information led and take responsibility for the quality of our data both in our external audit and standards work and in managing ourselves. We use data to improve our organisational management and prioritise the use of resources. This means supporting our people to deliver high quality work through good integrated planning, robust risk and project management and prioritisation and the ability to work flexibly across our schools.

**Accountability**

The Academies Financial Handbook is published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency to outline the legal duties on all Multi Academy Trusts. The Handbook also details the legal duties on the statutory roles required in every MAT: the accounting officer and the Chief Finance Officer. The standards expected of all public services are set out in the Treasury's 'Managing Public Money' document. These standards are: honesty, impartiality, openness, accountability, accuracy, fairness, integrity, transparency, objectivity and reliability carried out in the spirit of, as well as to the letter of, the law in the public interest to high ethical standards achieving value for money.

The accounting officer must be able to assure Parliament, and the public, of high standards of probity in the management of public funds, particularly:

- Value for money
- Regularity
- Propriety

The accounting officer must complete and sign a statement of compliance in these 3 areas each year and submit this to the Education and Skills Funding Agency with the audited accounts of the Trust. Value for money is a key concept. It means securing the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay over the period of use of the goods or services bought. It is not about minimising up front prices. Whether in conventional procurement, market testing, private finance or some other form of public private partnership, finding value for money involves an appropriate allocation of risk. As we grow, we will have a plan to use our resources on an affordable and sustainable path, within agreed limits and we will carry out procurement and project appraisal objectively and fairly, using cost benefit analysis and generally seeking good value for the Exchequer as a whole. Finally, we will use management information systems to gain assurance about value for money and the quality of delivery and so make timely adjustments.

**Working collaboratively**

We seek to work collaboratively both across our organisation and with other MATS, LAs, Teaching School Alliances and with all other agencies. We will use our experts across the Trust to use methods and consistent comparative frameworks to ensure we always deliver the best the Trust has to offer to all.

**Our Partnership**

No school can exist in isolation, and no Multi Academy Trust can thrive without having a wide range of partners. Families; social care and other children's and adult services; the health service; employers and other schools and settings: our partnerships help us improve ourselves as much as they allow us to influence others and help secure the best offer for our children. As the Trust grows and develops so our partnerships will expand. We are a Trust that values partnerships, something that requires balance between, and empowerment of all parties. Our partnerships aren't conditional on being a part of our Trust; the only condition is that our partnership work has a positive impact on the lives of children and families. In this spirit, we are open to any and all conversations with schools, organisations and individuals who want to work with us. Whether that's about a school joining the Trust; working with us collectively; or working with a school or a child individually. Seizing opportunities and being outward looking is the essence of LINK Learning Trust.

**Efficient business systems**

All our business support functions will seek to provide the essential services that our schools need. Our Business Support Team will endeavour to provide a service that can give the best possible support to teaching and learning. We will build a culture of efficiency ensuring we use systems and procedures in the most efficient manner possible by digital investment and streamlining activities across the trust.



## Link Learning Trust

### Report of the Trustees For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Objectives, Strategies and Activities**

##### **Our Resources**

LINK Learning Multi Academy Trust is currently a small organisation with a net resource requirement of some £4 million in 2018-19. We will continue to seek further efficiencies whilst ensuring we are still able to discharge our statutory functions. We cannot compromise on quality. Our educational function and our ability to respond quickly to emerging issues must be protected. We are committed to improving the way we do things while guaranteeing the quality of our educational delivery. Our teams will continue to work more efficiently, but the majority of our savings will come from a structural change of our corporate services/back office functions. We will go on to achieve further structural savings and our strategy focuses on our commitment to value for money. We have a medium term financial strategy which projects the Trust's income and expenditure against each of our 4 Strategic objectives to ensure our ambition is affordable and sustainable.

##### **Public benefit**

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on Public Benefit, when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

The key public benefit delivered by the Trust is the provision of high quality education to the pupils. The Academies Trust seeks to provide the cultural, physical, spiritual, social as well as academic development of its pupils.

Both schools are used as a resource by the local community. They are used by community groups ranging from, sports clubs to a full range of evening activities including yoga, kettle bells and Zumba.

#### **STRATEGIC REPORT**

##### **Achievement and performance**

The Trust was incorporated in March 2017 and the assets and liabilities of Barlow Hall Primary School and Brookburn Primary School were transferred into the Trust from the Local Authority on 1 April 2017.

During our second full year as an academy, much has been achieved. The main focus of development has been to consolidate and embed the trust's strategic direction ensuring that necessary systems and policies helped to deliver a clear and shared vision for the trust. Our academic performance indicators (see below) are strong in both schools.

##### **Barlow Hall's review of activities 2018-19:**

##### **Outcomes for pupils, summary statement:**

Overall the school's outcomes are securely good, with pupils making outstanding progress from entry to school in Nursery to the end of KS1. By the end of Year 6, attainment at the expected standard is in line with national averages in all subjects, demonstrating excellent progress across all key stages from low starting points.

Progress at the end of primary is positive and has always been positive in reading, writing and maths. In Key Stage 1, outcomes demonstrate accelerated progress from their GLD at the end of Reception in 2017, EYFS outcomes have further improved closer to the national average with good/ outstanding progress by the vast majority of children from their starting points on entry to the school. We remain proud of the difference to pupil progress and outcomes for our children with special educational needs and disabilities as well those children who are disadvantaged.

##### **Effectiveness of leadership and management, summary statement:**

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good because of the overall impact of leaders on pupils' learning and outcomes. Many aspects of leadership and management are outstanding - the senior leadership team, governance, safeguarding, the curriculum, SMSC and British Values. Whilst some groups also make outstanding progress - SEND, EHC – overall, pupil progress is good. There is a secure distributed leadership across all staff from support staff as well as teachers. Staff at Barlow Hall are committed to making the difference for all children. We are a national teaching school, have six specialist leaders of education (SLEs) in school and are often asked to support other schools. We are a member of the Manchester Teaching School Alliance and the Headteacher is a National Leader of Education (NLE).

##### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment, summary statement:**

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. There is consistently good practice in all phases of the school and the impact on all outcomes, academic and personal is also good. We have reviewed and updated our curriculum ready for the September 2019 Ofsted framework, welcoming the new direction from Ofsted as it supports the work we have been involved in for some time. We want our children to know more and remember more. We have an understanding of the progression in each subject and as teachers we are secure about the sequence of every lesson. This enables the vast majority of our children to keep up with the learning. For some SEND pupils (those with EHCPs or on the EHCP pathway), the curriculum is personalised to meet their needs because their needs are too complex for them to access the mainstream curriculum. These pupils receive specialist support for their basic skills, communication and being independent.

Link Learning Trust

Report of the Trustees  
For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

**STRATEGIC REPORT**  
**Achievement and performance**

**Personal development, behaviour and welfare, summary statement:**

Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are excellent, as reflected in the consistently good attendance and excellent behaviour and attitudes of pupils. The quality systems for pupil welfare impact very positively on pupils and their attitudes to school; they have excellent opportunities to develop themselves through the Young Leader programme. We support children's personal development through specific structured and researched programmes, restorative justice practices, rights respecting, empowering learning skills and zones of regulation.

**The effectiveness of the Early Years Provision, summary statement:**

Overall, children in EYFS make outstanding progress from very low starting points to achieve outcomes just below the national average because of outstanding leadership, teaching and learning, assessment and curriculum, which ensure that the individual needs of every children are met exactly and their progress maximised. In September 2018, we opened our two year old provision (Barlow Bears) and added a third year to our Early Years phase. We are negotiating with the local authority to run the Sure Start Children's Centre and are hoping to begin this exciting next step for our school in 2020.

**Brookburn's review of activities 2018-19:**

**Outcomes for pupils, summary statement:**

Outcomes in the school are securely good overall. The pattern of pupils achieving in line with the national average in the EYFS and at the end of KS1 and accelerating to be well above average reflects good progress overall, particularly in KS2. Leaders recognise the importance of ensuring more consistent and even progress and have taken effective steps to achieve this by strengthening the learning environment, improving teaching and learning and strengthening the accuracy and impact of assessment on pupils' learning lower down the school, with greater impact on outcomes as these changes embed and fully impact.

**Effectiveness of leadership and management, summary statement:**

Leadership and management is effective. Outcomes are improving in KS1 and have been maintained in the EYFS and KS2. Leaders are impacting positively on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and are raising expectations of pupils' achievement. Work has begun on the quality of education and knowledge progression, which leaders have correctly identified as an area for further development.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment, summary statement:**

Leaders are very realistic in their judgement of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They know that, whilst the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good across the school, the school's strengths lie in Upper Key Stage 2. Work to improve the quality of provision in the EYFS and KS1 to the same level as in Upper KS2 will continue next year, with the aim of maintaining the strength of the school's provision in KS2 and further strengthening the impact in the EYFS and KS1.

**Personal development, behaviour and welfare, summary statement:**

Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. There are effective systems for monitoring absence and attendance, managing pupils' behaviour and safeguarding. Leaders are aware of the need to improve provision for vulnerable pupils and have plans in place to achieve this.

**The effectiveness of the Early Years Provision, summary statement:**

The QAP agrees with the school's judgement that the quality of provision in the EYFS is good, with outcomes consolidating in line with the national average. Leaders judge that the 'legacy of inaccurate assessment' in the EYFS has been overcome and that EYFS outcomes provide a more reliable basis for pupils' learning moving forwards into KS1. The recognition that more needs to be done to improve the impact of the provision on children's learning demonstrates that leader have expectations of what children can achieve in the EYFS.

Link Learning Trust

Report of the Trustees  
For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

**STRATEGIC REPORT**  
**Achievement and performance**

**Standards across the Trust in 2019**

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

<b>Expected standard</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Brookburn</b>	<b>Barlow Hall</b>
Good level of development	72%	73%	70%
Communication and language	82%	78%	70%
Physical development	87%	88%	78%
Personal, social and emotional	85%	86%	72%
Literacy	73%	75%	70%
Reading	77%	76%	70%
Writing	74%	75%	70%
Maths	78%	83%	70%
Understanding of the world	84%	88%	78%
Expressive arts	87%	100%	78%

**Key Stage 1**

<b>Expected standard</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Brookburn</b>	<b>Barlow Hall</b>
Reading	75%	77%	78%
Writing	69%	68%	67%
Maths	76%	75%	82%
Phonics	82%	93%	81%
Combined	65%	63%	60%

**Greater depth**

<b>(exceeding the standard)</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Brookburn</b>	<b>Barlow Hall</b>
Reading	25%	33%	18%
Writing	15%	13%	11%
Maths	22%	22%	18%
Combined	13%	13%	11%

**Key Stage 2**

<b>Expected standard</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Brookburn</b>	<b>Barlow Hall</b>
Reading	73%	95%	73%
Writing	78%	84%	81%
Maths	79%	91%	84%
GPS	78%	95%	89%
Combined	65%	80%	70%

**Greater depth**

<b>(exceeding the standard)</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Brookburn</b>	<b>Barlow Hall</b>
Reading	27%	59%	30%
Writing	20%	21%	11%
Maths	27%	36%	23%
GPS	36%	50%	50%
Combined	11%	16%	5%

Link Learning Trust

Report of the Trustees  
For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

**STRATEGIC REPORT**

**Achievement and performance**

The strategic plan for 2019 -20 will focus on KPIs to drive the next stage of development for the trust.

These include:

**Educational Strategy - Increasing quality of provision from all our schools**

1. OFSTED Leadership and Management grade will be at least good with outstanding features in both schools at the next inspections.
2. 100% good/outstanding teaching in all schools of the trust.
3. Progress indicator at end of KS2 above zero in each subject - reading, writing, maths.
4. National averages to be met or exceeded in GLD, phonics, KS1 and KS2 SATs, reading writing and maths including combined scores.
5. Pursue opportunities: 100% of children access at least one enrichment activity e.g. outdoor education/activity/residential, play a musical instrument, take part in a local event e.g. sports competition
6. Effective citizens: 100% children involved in at least one community charity event
7. All schools will achieve silver Rights Respecting Award within 2 years of joining the Trust.
8. School attendance data higher than national average (contextualised) for all schools within 2 years
9. All schools Behaviour and Safety grading of 1 - within 2 years of joining the Trust/ at first section 5 inspection, whichever is soonest.
10. Safeguarding audit - no red flags on trust's risk register.

**People and Partners - Leadership and professionalism drives continuous improvement**

1. 80% teachers pursuing career progression/ development training route within the last two years
2. <5% posts advertised twice in all schools
3. 80% retention of RQT (Recently Qualified Teachers)
4. 80% retention of outstanding teachers
5. Staff attendance maintained at >95% in all schools
6. At least 90% staff record high levels of well being

**Financially Linked**

1. No more than /less than 78% total income spent on staffing staff pay as a % of total expenditure.

**Finance & Probity - ensuring a financially viable and sustainable trust**

1. Robust financial parameters maintained: all schools maintaining 1% in-year surplus
2. Maintain £220k in Trust reserves
3. Less than 0.5% cover costs (excluding temporary contracts and supply spent on covering class teachers)
4. Maintain pupil to teacher ratio 1:30 (class based) Year 1 to 6.

**Compliance and risk**

1. 100% skills coverage in Trust Board maintained at all times: at least one leading representative for: Education, HR, legal, financial, business evidenced by annual audit
2. Risk Register: measure: 0 red flags
3. Trust web sites and individual school web sites compliant.

## Link Learning Trust

### Report of the Trustees For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

#### **STRATEGIC REPORT**

##### **Financial review**

Revenue income received in the year relates predominantly to grants received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in the form of the General Annual Grant and Pupil Premium Grant which are shown as restricted general funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

In the year to 31 August 2019 the Trust has had a total income of £4,661k (excluding capital income) and total expenditure (excluding depreciation and FRS102 pension adjustments) of £4,606k. The surplus of revenue (i.e. excluding restricted fixed asset funds and pension reserve) income over expenditure for the period is £55k.

At 31 August 2019 the net book value of fixed assets was £11,598k. The value of fixed assets includes the value of those assets which were transferred by Manchester City Council as part of the transfer agreement, which comprises the land and buildings for Barlow Hall Primary School and Brookburn Primary School (which are occupied on a 125 year lease from the local authority at a peppercorn rent) plus the fixtures, fittings, furniture and equipment on the two sites at the point of transfer. These assets have been used for the provision of education and associated support services to the pupils of the two Trust schools.

The deficit in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) of £1,511K is recognised in the balance sheet as per the requirements of FRS102. The pension deficit is not expected to have any material impact on the financial viability of the organisation.

##### **Investment policy**

The trustees have adopted a cautious investment policy, the main principle of which is to safeguard the Trust's cash funds. In light of this approach, the Trust maintains substantial cash balances, the bulk of which is held for necessary monthly running expenses in a current account.

##### **Reserves policy**

The Board of Trustees have developed a reserves policy and it is presented within the manual of financial procedures. The Board will review the reserve levels of the Academy Trust annually at the year-end and as a part of its budget planning process.

This review encompasses the nature of the income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. Trustees determine what the level of uncommitted reserves should be. The aim is to provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipt of grants and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies such as urgent maintenance.

As part of its monitoring of in-year financial performance the Board of Trustees reviews the forecast impact on reserves and considers this as a part of its medium term financial planning. The Trustees aim to hold a minimum of 2 months funds inherited on conversion for operating costs of the Trust in general reserves (excluding fixed asset funds and the pension fund). This approximates to £220k.

At 31 August 2019, the Trust held general unrestricted reserves of £327k and restricted general reserves (excluding the pension fund) of £149k. This is a surplus of the reserves policy target by £256k.

##### **Going concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, the board of trustees has a reasonable expectation that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Statement of Accounting Policies.

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

The Academy Trust has established a Risk Register and regular reports will be submitted to the Trust Board by the Committees and Executive Team.

Financial risks have been identified and are managed, they include; possible funding formula changes which may have an effect on school budgets and inability in this transition period to deliver necessary savings over the medium term. The Academy Trust has initiated actions via its Executive Team in order to mitigate these risks. Regular reporting and monitoring are in place with projections as necessary to illustrate potential scenarios. The Trust is continuing to develop robust internal systems and processes to mitigate any financial risk.

Link Learning Trust

Report of the Trustees  
For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

**STRATEGIC REPORT**

**Fundraising**

The Trust ensures that all fundraising activities are carried out in a transparent and up-front manner and that "proof of donations" are displayed for staff, visitors and pupils to see after all fundraising activities. The use of funds obtained through fundraising activities is tracked by Academy's senior leadership teams and reports are completed by the Schools Business Manager and School Business Support Manager.

**Future plans**

The objectives for the Trust this year and going forward are to:

- Further development of the curriculum aligning, where appropriate and agreed, the intent and implementation of the reviewed curriculum across both schools.
- Professional development for both subject leaders so they can deliver professional development across both schools.
- Develop a school leadership model for Sure Start Children's Centre.
- Review of Business Back Office structures to enable growth of our Trust.
- To procure further services across the schools delivering better efficiencies.
- Apply for Condition Improvement Funding (CIF).
- Timely response to any recommendations made by internal audit.

**AUDITORS**

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

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

Allotts Business Services Ltd, having expressed their willingness to continue in office, will be deemed reappointed for the next financial year in accordance with section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006, unless the charitable company receives notice under section 488(1) of the Companies Act 2006.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and signed on the board's behalf by:

.....*J. Dean*.....  
Joan Dean - Acting Chair of Link Learning Trust

Link Learning Trust

Governance Statement  
For The Year Ended 31 August 2019

**Scope of Responsibility**

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

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 LINK Learning Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

**Governance**

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Report of the Trustees and in the Trustees Responsibility Statement. The board of trustees has formally met in total 12 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the board of trustees was as follows:

<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Lord K Bradley	4	4
J M Dean	3	4
J Kennedy	4	4
S Ferris	4	4
T C N Hilton	3	4
J M E Shuttleworth	3	4
C A Starbuck	1	4
A R Young	-	4
T W Matthews	2	4
S Johnson	3	4

The trustees meet at least each term with the first meeting of each academic year being the AGM. Committees of the Trust will meet at least twice a year and report to the Trust Board. Academy Councils and their committees will also meet on a termly basis and if required, report to the Resources Committee, Standards Committee or the Trust Board for approval in relation to non-delegated matters. Trustees will ensure they fulfil their legal obligation in the Academies Financial handbook of meeting six times per year by way of full trust meetings and Finance and Resources Committee meetings. (At least 3 per year). Accounts monitoring will take place submitting these records to the Chair of the Finance Committee and the Accounting Officer for sign off on a monthly basis.

The Academy has various sub-Committees of the main governing body. The Resource Committee Its purpose is to manage the Academy's resources, staffing resources, health and safety and safeguarding and finances efficiently and effectively. Attendance at the various meeting in the year was as described below:

**The Resource Committee**

<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
J Kennedy	4	4
S Ferris	2	4
T C N Hilton	3	4
J M E Shuttleworth	2	4
A R Young	3	4
S Johnson	2	4

**Standards Committee**

<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
J M Dean	2	2
J Kennedy	2	2
S Ferris	2	2
C A Starbuck	2	2
T W Matthews	1	2

**Pay Committee**

<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Lord K Bradley	1	1
J Kennedy	1	1
S Ferris	1	1
T C N Hilton	1	1
C A Starbuck	1	1