

## School Resource Management Adviser Comprehensive Report for The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust

Prepared by: **Mark O'Brien**  
**September 2024 – March 2025**

### Executive Summary

The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust (TEFAT) is a national Trust with 33 schools arranged in a three-region structure. It has 13,179 pupils on roll (not including nursery), employs 1,405 FTE of staff, has an annual revenue of c.£104m, an in-year surplus for the FY 2024/25 projected to be c.£277k and is forecasting a year-end free reserve position of c.£5.3m.

This report provides an overview of the resource management at TEFAT and concludes that the Trust is an exceptionally well organised and led organisation. It has at its core the principal value of inclusive education that does not exclude vulnerable learners. Operating as it does in areas of high deprivation with high levels of pupil premium and EAL pupils, the Trust seeks to be a provider of outstanding educational and well-being outcomes for their pupils (and staff as well as other stakeholders). They have a number of interesting and fruitful partnerships in place with charities and corporates which bring added value into the organisation. The policies, procedures and culture of the organisation help to promote a sense of shared vision and accountability underpinned by inclusive, distributed leadership.

As the Trust is not in a deficit position, forecasting as it is a small surplus £206k surplus over the next three-years, this report has sought to review existing systems and offer some helpful observations and recommendations for consideration by TEFAT leaders (only one of which is costed). In summary these are:

1. Review the organisational decision to not proactively approach schools or smaller Trusts to instigate the conversation about joining TEFAT. TEFAT should regard itself as a strong Trust and one that has much to offer other schools. Equally the SRMA considers that the Department for Education (DfE) should regard TEFAT as a strong partner to have in helping find solutions for schools which may be struggling for financial, educational or other reasons. TEFAT would be a positive option for many and could have a significantly positive impact on other vulnerable children's life outcomes. It is in this context that it is being recommended that TEFAT consider identifying schools that fit its values and delivery model and become more proactive in looking to initiate those conversations.
2. Embed some of the wider ICFP metrics into the extensive data sets that are already being used across the Trust, including review of the teacher contact ratio data from schools and the PPA time being allocated to teachers.
3. Review expenditure on administrative supplies and assess whether these costs can be reduced over time.
4. Work through the 13 uncoded recommendations listed at the end of this report.

## **PART 1: Context and Background**

### **1.1 Trust/School Introduction**

The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust (TEFAT) is a national multi-academy trust with thirty-three schools arranged into three regions: London, West Midlands and East Anglia. For the 2024/25 financial year it is forecasting a revenue income of c.£104m with a small in-year surplus of c.£277k. TEFAT's governance structure has five members, four people and the Elliot Foundation.

TEFAT has a period of two years where they did not grow and instead used this time to restructure and refocus itself. It reshaped its central team and streamlined some of its processes and activities and consequently now has a 'flat' organisation, having as it now does, a small Central Services Team based in London which offers schools a range of corporate services such as finance, HR and estate development. Each Regional Director has c.10 schools to manage and support and this represents a cost-effective delivery model for the Trust.

The Trust has 13,179 pupils on roll across its schools and has a particular focus on inclusive mainstream education and has five SEN units located within their schools. This has resulted in a higher-than-average number of children at their schools with a registered SEN need (c.20%) or an EHCP (4%), some of the detail of which is shown below.

School Name	PP	EAL	SEN%	#EHCPs
Billesley Primary School	40.3%	37.9%	20.4%	33
Cavalry Primary School	40.3%	37.9%	20.4%	33
Chandos Primary School	44.8%	59.1%	41.0%	5
Childs Hill	28.4%	89.7%	19.6%	30
Cippenham School	15.0%	49.0%	21.0%	25
Claremont Primary School	48.0%	74.6%	23.0%	29
Croft Academy	62.0%	52.0%	21.4%	18
Elm Road Primary School	31.4%	45.9%	11.1%	6
Eyrescroft Primary School	46.5%	54.5%	17.7%	11
George Betts	33.0%	82.0%	15.0%	14
Greenside Primary School	28.38%	56.3%	11.7%	7
Griffin Primary School	62.2%	63.3%	26.7%	18
Highlees Primary School	45.2%	60.9%	15.9%	12
Hillingdon Primary School	21.7%	61.8%	11.4%	18
Hollywood	37.0%	12.0%	22.0%	21
John Locke Academy	9.0%	24.2%	13.3%	18
Kings Rise Academy	62.0%	23.9%	18.0%	5
Millfield Primary School	22.3%	10.9%	24.8%	10
Nene	33.0%	57.0%	25.0%	18
Netherbrook	38.0%	5.1%	26.0%	19
Parkfield Primary School	21.6%	92.0%	23.0%	19
Pinkwell Primary School	28.9%	83.5%	17.7%	20
Ramnoth Junior School	47.0%	50.0%	22.0%	23
Ramsey Junior School	46.0%	10.0%	24.0%	12
Ramsey Spinning	32.0%	8.0%	17.0%	4
Rounds Green	35.0%	44.2%	15.5%	15
Shireland Hall	26.0%	61.7%	12.9%	37
The Hyde School	18.3%	74.3%	17.0%	24
The Shirestone Academy	60.0%	14.2%	15.0%	1
Tiverton Academy	38.8%	48.5%	19.4%	4
Westwood Primary School	40.5%	7.9%	23.3%	19
Woods Bank	63.0%	8.0%	21.0%	16
TRUST AVERGAES	38.0%	45.6%	19.8%	17

The Trust has had a steady rate of growth across the last few years and seeks to keep this level of growth at 6-9% per annum. This has mainly been achieved through accepting individual schools into the Trust. Currently TEFAT have three Board-approved conversions in progress in the West Midlands, one voluntary two directive academy orders which in total would increase the Trust's revenue by about 8-9%. There are also a small number of other conversations ongoing.

Previously TEFAT felt a pressure to grow in order to make the organisation more financially sustainable. The cost of onboarding, integrating and improving new schools in recent years has escalated mainly due to capital costs, staffing problems and structural problems. Most primary schools that are still maintained are quite small (generally <£2m revenue) which require similar level of input and engagement from the Trust to onboard but contribute a smaller amount to core costs. TEFAT are now seeking to accept groups of schools or smaller MAT's into their Trust as this is likely to be more economically viable as a process. The Trust has never turned down a potential new school for educational reasons but have had to make that decision due to financial or estate challenges that would put the Trust as a whole at too high degree of risk.

There are many external factors that affect growth but from a geographical perspective, the main area that TEFAT would like to expand is around the West

Midlands and Milton Keynes areas. The dispersal of TEFAT schools in differing urban/rural settings, within differing local authority priorities and funding mechanisms means that a more nuanced approach to growth must be adopted.

Some local authorities are more proactive with identifying and supporting schools to academise than others and a number of schools in these areas are PFI which presents other problems. TEFAT are open to SEND settings joining the Trust as it is line with their ethos, but do not consider secondary schools are an area they wish to expand into, as this would result in fundamental changes for the organisation.

TEFAT doesn't proactively approach schools/trusts to start conversion conversations at present they only respond to requests from settings. It was explained that this approach ensures that schools are coming to them for the right reasons and that the values of the potential new school will be better aligned with TEFAT if the school has chosen to initiate the process. Organisational culture has proven to be a significant factor for new schools joining the Trust. TEFAT do not want to be seen to be pressurising schools to join them and so will ensure the reasons for a potential new school joining are correct and aligned to their own values.

The Trust has strong relationships with key stakeholders, and many systems embedded into its operations that allow for dynamic monitoring and feedback. It also has a rich data management system which creates a wealth of information helping to generate business in-sights and enable robust management and leadership of the organisation. The Trust does also place importance on understanding the qualitative information as well as quantitative and so this data is used to help inform conversation and analysis but not overshadow it.

Some of the current areas of focus for the Executive Leadership Team are:

- Strategic management and leadership of the Trust.
- Ensuring statutory, financial and legal compliance.
- Ensuring due diligence is completed properly for any new schools and the 'cost of transfer' for new schools is kept under review.
- Managing risk – both strategic and estate/property.
- Promoting a strong and positive set of values and culture for the organisation.

The Trust has formed a number of partnerships with charities and corporates to help add value to their schools which they report has helped not only address some entrenched socio-economic issues, but also help build trust between the schools and their communities both internally and externally. A couple of examples of this work are:

- Community Box – an initiative which started during Covid in partnership with Rackets Cubed, Fair Share, Felix Project, City Harvest, Tesco InKind Direct. It provides essential food, cleaning and personal hygiene product bundles to vulnerable families in EFT schools. Since March 2020 117,000 bundles have been distributed to families across 22 TEFAT schools that have the scheme running. This has delivered £3.5m of value into the TEFAT communities but comparatively cost the schools very little. In school such as Claremont, which has 40 asylum seeker families and Parkfield and Pinkwell, which have very high number of EAL families, this initiative has helped to build trust and given the school a way in to discuss some other problems that these vulnerable

families are experiencing.

- Rackets Cubed – is an education inclusion programme which engages children in their education through sport by removing the barriers for children to do sports with high equipment costs.

The medium to long-term aim of the organisation is for all their schools to be performing above the national averages and be beacons of outstanding inclusive education which does not exclude pupils due to their vulnerable or SEN/additional need. Within the context of their schools often being located in quite deprived areas (76% of schools in high scoring deprivation areas ranked on IDACI), they want to ensure that all settings are individually and collectively as a Trust, financially viable and helping to drive up life outcomes in their local communities. They will also seek to achieve this by developing further their community outreach programmes in partnership with other organisations and in doing so leverage additional value into their schools from other sources of funding.

#### **Dip Sample**

Local leaders report seeing a significant increase in the number of EHCPs being given to pupils at their schools and a general increase in SEN needs, particularly non-verbal children. This is often coupled with an increasing level of PP or EAL which adds to the complexity of some family's situations and presents additional barriers to engagement. Finding holistic solutions to a family's problems has (i.e. addressing housing issues, debt management, domestic violence or mental health problems) become increasingly important to the success of schools and this is being delivered in partnership with other local charities and organisations.

## **1.2 Forecasting and Financial Planning**

TEFAT have exceptionally robust systems for planning, monitoring and reporting on the finances of the Trust, both current and future. Like many Trusts, TEFAT has found budgets increasingly difficult to balance which in recent years has been made more challenging by the unfunded educational support staff pay award in 2022/23. Despite proactive management, this has made balancing the budget difficult and therefore managing the finances through the year has become a constant focus for TEFAT.

It has become almost impossible to fully balance the budget when looking on a three-year forecast basis, as staff pay awards are highly likely and need to be costed into the budget but correspondingly the uplift in funding cannot be relied upon and therefore not fully factored in. The Trust does undertake scenario-based budgeting and this looks at the worst- and best-case scenarios before finding a moderated middle position which is then adopted in the formal budget. Due to the medium-term financial uncertainties, TEFAT does not focus too much on the three-year picture but instead focuses its attention on Year 1 going into Year 2.

Both the leadership team of the Trust as a whole and the financial management team within the central Trust team are very experienced. They are well versed in scrutinising the in-year picture and working fluidly with colleagues based in the local schools to understand budgetary pressures and taking corrective action where necessary.

The process employed to set the budget starts when the October Census data is made available to schools. The Trust plots the likely pupil numbers for each school as well as holding conversations with HR to factor in known payroll costs. This is then integrated with any known information relating to either central or local government grants or from other information and data sets from the DfE or other sources. This includes taking a position on what the inflationary pressures might be for the schools and factoring this into non-staffing cost areas of the budget.

The Trust central finance team then create a set of topline budget setting assumptions and criteria and from this then build a budget for each of their schools. Two HT's of TEFAT schools were met with as part of this deployment and report being very happy with the way in which budgets are created. They state that the Trust is supportive with establishing the initial budget position but allows each individual school the flexibility to make a business case for changing the initial draft.

Local leaders define what the staffing structures should be for the coming year(s) and this is inputted into ICFP budgeting software used across the Trust. If, in-year, schools wish/need to recruit someone that was not in the original budget, then there is a process to go through where the HT completes a request form that goes for consideration and approval by both the finance and education leads.

This process ensures scrutiny of pay-progression as well as any changes in TLR payments or changes in leadership. The accounting system used is updated by IRIS for GAG funding info based on what gets released from central government but these assumptions are double checked by the central finance team and are normally very accurate. TEFAT have budgeted 3% inflationary uplift across all posts for 2024/25 onwards.

Schools are regularly asked to check employee details via payroll and changes are made by the schools themselves. The Trust's Regional Directors play a key role in the budget setting and scrutiny and assessing whether the school can withstand any further budget reduction if needed. This process is usually concluded by February each year with a set of budgets being agreed and signed off for each school as well as for the Trust as a whole. It is important to the Trust that the financial planning work is complete by this time of year as it then allows for more time for problem solving and addressing any financial issues that may still be present.

Each school has a named finance business partner (FBP) that supports their setting both in the initial setting of budgets and through the year to manage the financial position of their school. The FBP's have a small cluster of schools each and have a deep understanding of their settings acting as the financial controller for the schools. There are regional HT meetings which allow for collective discussion as well as peer-to-peer support and the sharing of good practice (including sharing any initiatives that have found efficiencies).

The arrangements for each FBP is slightly different as each have a slightly different specialist background which the Trust utilise. One of the main benefits of the FBP structure is that the schools have a niche finance professional that knows the setting well and is able to join up staffing, pupil numbers and financial data to give thorough quality assurance to the financial plans of each individual school, which in turns

means the Trust's financial management is fully assured. The FBP's also assisted the schools in migrating their financial data across to the new DfE budget system last year (FY2023/24) which has enabled the Trust to be more analytical with its data.

Following this process, a 'Finance Workbook' is created for each school and this then feeds into the financial and organisational monitoring of the Trust as a whole. These documents should be regarded as exemplary practice as they bring together all the different data sets needed to fully triangulate a school's position for both the current year and the medium term. A more detailed review of this document is included later in this report. The schools have access to their finances on the dynamic basis and can rerun reports based on different scenarios to see how the changes have impacted, but the final agreement is through the finance leads and regularly reviewed as part of the principals fortnightly briefing.

If a school needs to set a deficit budget then these must be licensed by the Central Finance team and discussions are held with HT before, during and after the planning process. Plans are made around reducing the deficit and returning the school to a balanced financial position and these are formally reviewed via an annual conversation review process that monitors and reports on the progress being made. Schools that are managing a deficit position receive additional support from the Trust's central services and there is a formal governance process, Governance+ model, which TEFAT uses to ensure greater oversight and deeper scrutiny of the setting. An example of this is Pinkwell Primary School that has received significant amounts of support and additional input from central services over the last four years in order to improve its position.

Whilst the funds for all schools are held centrally and therefore the free reserve position for the Trust as a whole is satisfactory (outturn for FY2023/24 this stood at £4.95m) each school has their finances tracked individually and therefore has a reserve position allocated to them. Currently, the Trust has a small number of schools that are in deficit (either in-year or cumulative) and these are a mixture of declining and improving deficit position. Licensed deficits are reviewed and approved (or not) on a yearly basis but there is an assumption that repayments of any deficit are achieved within three years.

Where there is significant concern regarding pupil numbers, the Trust will give additional scrutiny around pupil planning and looking at what more can be done to increase numbers. In extreme cases where the pupil numbers are falling so far as to make the financial sustainability of the school not possible, the Trust will initiate high level conversations with colleagues at the local authority and review options. This has on one occasion resulted in the Trust (in conjunction with the hosting LA) deciding to close a school.

TEFAT operate a 'membership services fee' to its schools and this fee is set at 5.8% of GAG funding for each school. The services included for this fee are clearly laid out in the Trusts membership document. TEFAT have benchmarked their membership fee against other Trust's management fee/top-slice arrangements. When they have looked at like-for-like MATs, the range seems to be quite a broad range 3%-10%. To fully understand what value looks like in this area it is important to understand the detail of what is included within the offer. How central Trusts services are organised

and the structure and clustering of schools within a Trust also have an effect on this assessment.

This fee level is not set in stone however and the Trust looks for ways to reduce this fee where possible (e.g. in previous financial years the fee level was 6.1%). Newly converting schools will often query what they are getting for their money but existing schools do not challenge this as they see the value of the support they receive from central services. New schools quickly come to realise the value.

The Trust reports that the cost of onboarding a new school outweighs the income from the management fee in the short-term, as often they come with challenges and need a disproportionate amount of support. The Trust feel they are very strong at supporting new schools to turnaround difficult positions and over the previous few years have made rapid improvement in all schools they have accepted into their Trust.

TEFAT reports that there are a small number of schools that struggle to live within their means. Although reserves are pooled, they are nominally allocated to each school with some schools being net contributors others are not (e.g. Nene and Ramnoth – consistent net contributors). The Central Team have individual conversations with each school in relation to any deficits and manage those situations more proactively in order to moderate any overall financial impact and ensure financial stability for the Trust as a whole.

Big projects and the overall capital investment programme are overseen by the Estates Director. Capital surveys are commissioned annually and this helps to identify any larger projects needed (e.g. boilers/windows/fire compartmentation etc.) which are funded centrally. TEFAT has developed a costed multi-year remedial plan over the past five years which captures all the key information and is updated when action has been taken. Along with the Management Accounts this gets reported to and scrutinised by the Board. TEFAT balance the longer-term investment decisions with the more proactive areas such as replacement of toilets and kitchens etc. which gets requested and defined by the local leaders. The Estates Director leads on raising money for capital funding and there are conversations with local leaders about funding applications.

#### **Dip Sample**

Local leaders reported holding meetings with colleagues in the Central Finance Team in April/May, reviewing income, pupil numbers and fixed expenditure such as staffing costs and utilities alongside ongoing local school priorities for spending in the schools SDP and changing pupil needs, particularly SEN needs. At these meetings any trends are examined and staff starters/leavers factored in, HR are involved where necessary and there is a focused conversation on raising standards. Any big capital projects are discussed and budgets are finalised and ratified in July.

HT/Principals reported feeling very supported by the central function and that they can articulate their needs, through open dialogue with Central Services, innovation is promoted and as long as the evidence supports the schools position they receive the support they need to secure the resources they require.

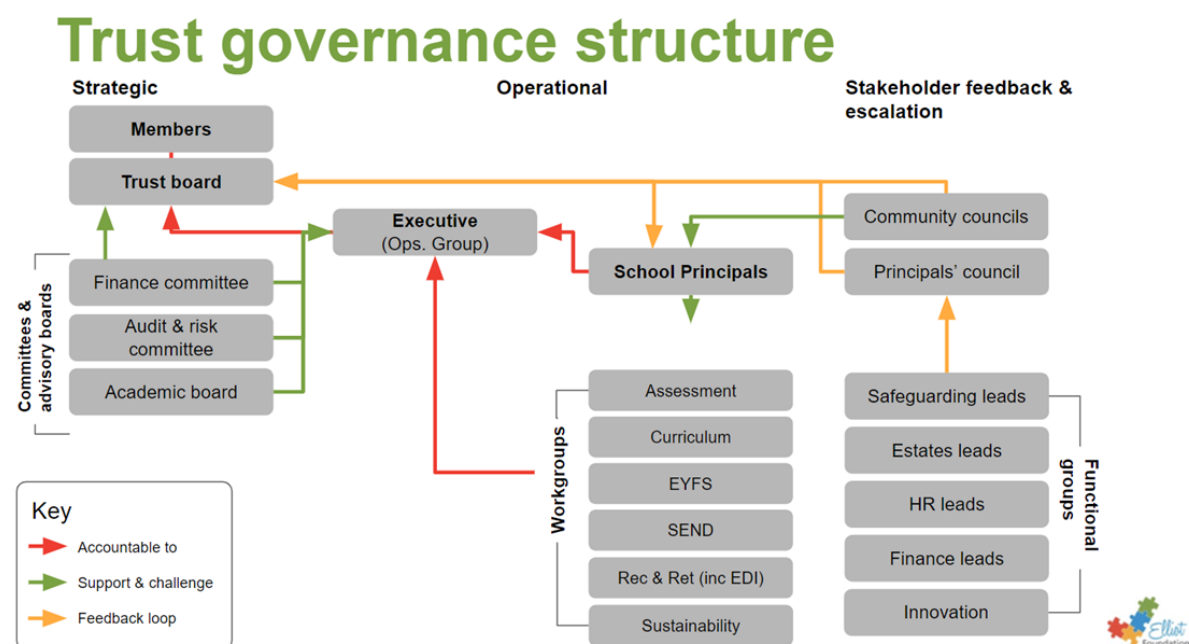
There is a focus for all schools to remain within budgets and local leaders and



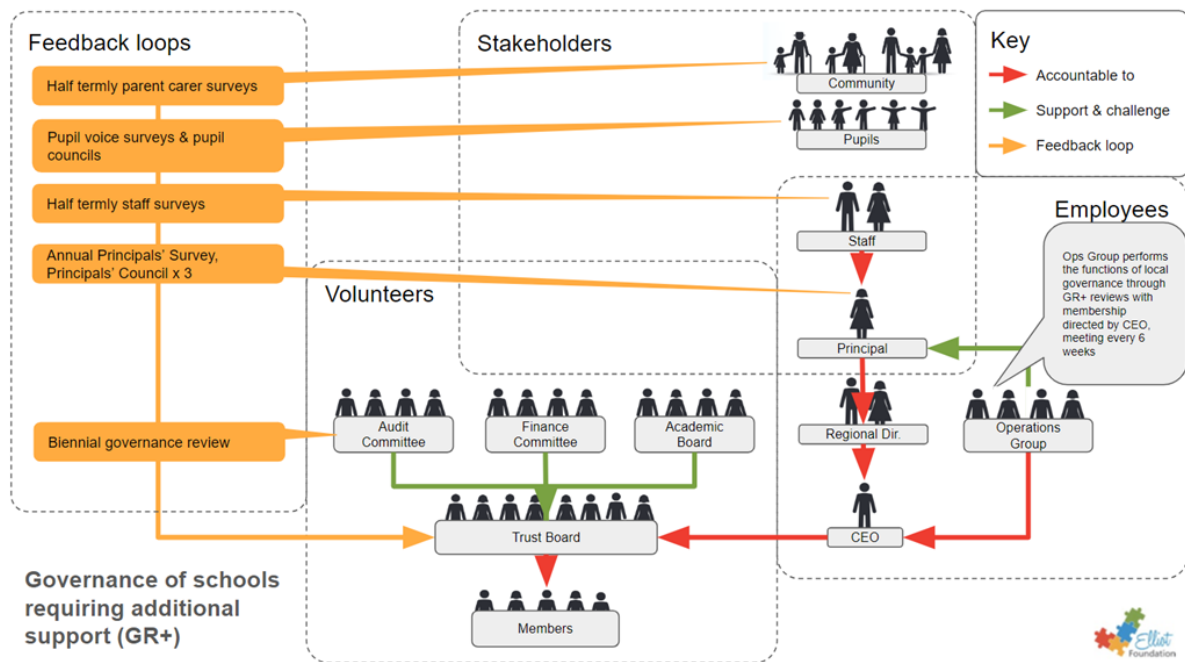
governors report being well informed on the financial data including their allocated reserve position and that the scrutiny happens regardless of whether the decisions result in deficit or surplus. Rationale for proposed changes, accessing of reserves on a business case basis and scenario-based analysis and conversations take place between the Regional Directors and the schools, it is rare that school and centre don't agree on a request for support. Local leaders stated that there is a growing focus at a local level for estate and long-term planning of priorities and that these are discussed within the Governance Review meetings.

### 1.2.1 Financial Governance

As part of this review a meeting was held with the Chair of the Trust's Finance Committee (FC). The financial governance at TEFAT is robust with an experienced and qualified Board Committee leading this work. The FC meets once a term at a frequency that dovetails into the financial monitoring and reporting schedule for the Trust. The Committee receives thorough, accurate and complete financial reporting for all schools from the Trust allowing for monitoring of all schools, but will give particular attention to those that may be struggling. The diagram below shows how the Trust structures its governance arrangements.



The Committee seek to ensure that all schools are managing their finances within their own budget and make them aware that it is not the case that if they get in financial difficulties they will be bailed out by the Trust. Instead, they encourage schools to engage with the Central Services Finance Team and discuss their challenges in advance of any pressures becoming too great, which helps promote financial discipline. As mentioned above, TEFAT have a Governance+ model which they enact with schools that are struggling financially (or indeed for any other reason) and this process is shown in the diagram below.



There is no incentive therefore for a school to think they can run at a deficit unchecked as any budget recovery or investment plan is paid back to the Trust over the short term (normally as a maximum this would be within three years). The Chair of the FC highlighted that there are strong links between the finance function and the educational function and that strong financial management is central to the work of the education advisors. One of the key issues that the FC monitors is that there is good basic financial discipline within the schools locally as well as centrally and that all schools know that the Trust is there to support them. The Trust ensures simple, well understood messaging to all schools on their financial position.

The FC does review some of the comparative financial information sets that are created by the Central Team and find these helpful as they provide good business insights and also curate the financial management information in a helpful way. They note though that it is very important to understand each schools individual position, ensuring that they fully understand the narrative and context affecting each school.

The Chair of the FC confirmed that if there is a financial problem, in-depth conversations are held with the school and these are then discussed at FC meetings. The two main issues that seem to often give rise to these conversations is either falling pupil numbers or the SEN needs of the pupils at a particular school and the financial pressures this puts on the school.

In-year and cumulative deficits are dealt with slightly differently. If the school has a history of strong financial management and the financial pressure is for a specific reason (i.e. new/urgent priorities arising, capital investment or a high level of maternity) then the school is supported to work through its options and generally speaking will return to a surplus position quite quickly. It is when the reasons for the deficit are more structural (e.g. SLT is too large) that the FC are more involved. Again, though TEFAT believe that communication is key to ensuring that individual schools have a clear understanding of their responsibility for the deficit.

For example, one school in Barnet (Pinkwell), that has particular challenges in terms

of falling pupil numbers for which the Trust has licensed a deficit budget (this deficit is funded from the cumulative reserve position of the Trust). In these situations, the Trust will support local Governors where necessary with the conversations with the local authority and through this additional scrutiny, ensure progress is being made. Both with this school and with others that have a more marginal financial deficit, the FC are kept updated on the work that has been undertaken and the ongoing conversations with schools around the review of any staffing structures and curriculum delivery changes that may be needed in order to balance the budget.

Overall, over the last few years there has been a downwards trajectory for the Trust's reserve position. The Trust has a policy reserve position of 5% but the aforementioned financial discipline which has been promoted within all TEFAT schools has set the correct tone to this work and has helped schools to not overspend. The Trust keeps the strategic financial processes under review and periodically assesses whether there would be different or better ways of structuring the financial management at the Trust i.e. the pooling of GAG or licensing of deficits. The procedures in place currently are working for the Trust and the FC reviews consequences of major financial decisions and the impact of SEN levels etc.

Reporting is very comprehensive and conversation in the meetings are robust as was evidenced through the excellent governance paperwork that has been seen as part of this review. The check and balance function that the FC provides for the Trust is robust and the committee recognised the positive impact the senior officers of the Trust has on the overall financial and organisational health of the organisation.

The Trust has found it very difficult to balance their three-year budget due to the recent pay awards not being matched by the funding uplift. The FC focuses its efforts on the review and scrutiny of the year one figures. Experience has shown that numerous elements of the financial calculations change over the medium term and so many in-year changes are needed to ensure the Trust continues to manage its finances appropriately.

The Year 2 and 3 figures don't stay static for very long particularly when new schools have joined and require upfront investment (or senior officer time resource) to ensure rapid turnaround improvement. Each year the organisation takes the necessary steps to realign their budget position. This need for annual realignment makes financial discipline even more important within TEFAT and they monitor this strongly.

Growth is an important part of the conversation for both the FC and the Board as a whole. The Trust is looking at a number of options currently in this space e.g. expansion into Birmingham area for which they have appointed a second Regional Director to enable the expansion and be 'growth ready'. The Trust is keen to help more schools that wish to join it, but don't actively identify schools to approach. Whilst it is true that more schools joining the Trust will help to sustain the central structure, this is not a prevailing factor for the Trust in pursuing growth. On a couple of occasions previously TEFAT has had negative experiences from taking on schools that were in challenging positions. The Trust has learned from this and ensure they are being positive but not too optimistic about the position of potential new schools when taking them on.

Any conversations about growth are mainly held at Board level but the financial due diligence work comes to the FC for scrutiny. One of the main assessments that the Trust will consider when assessing a potential school for joining TEFAT is whether the school is able to address its problems swiftly and return itself to a balanced position within three years. Both capital investment and senior officer time is considered and shorter-term financial imperatives for a setting are balanced with longer term financial implications.

**Dip Sample**

Local leaders reported that all schools are classified as a GR or GR+ and that the level of scrutiny increases where necessary with RD's visiting GR schools twice a half-term with GR+ schools receiving an RD visit once a fortnight. The role of the RD in these situations is not just to speak to the HT/Principals but to be out in the classrooms, speaking to staff and pupils to obtain a deeper, broader picture that enables more proactive action. RD's are seen as crucial in maintaining and driving up teaching standards in the schools.

Once every half-term there is a meeting with all regional schools. All central services directors will have a voice in those meetings sometimes in-person sometimes via presenting a paper virtually. RD will meet with central finance and HR business partners once a month to review all their schools.

**1.2.2 Forecasting and Pupil Numbers**

Pupil numbers are managed locally but scrutinised by the Trust as a whole through the Finance Workbook system. Currently the school has 13,179 pupils on roll at its schools with only seven showing as having falling rolls across the last two years. In total, the Trusts pupil numbers have increased by 619 (including 421 due to a new school Hollywood joining the Trust).

Academy Pupil Numbers R-6	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	3yr change
Billesley Primary School	624	630	644	20
Cavalry Primary School	419	407	417	-2
Claremont Primary	296	302	268	-28
Childs Hill Primary School	406	418	412	6
Chandos Primary School	389	411	405	16
Cippenham	1,016	1,037	1,029	13
Croft Academy	211	208	203	-8
Elm Road Primary School	207	204	210	3
Eyrescroft Primary School	260	263	260	0
George Betts Primary Academy	389	393	392	3
Griffin Primary School	179	155	142	-37
Greenside Primary School	199	202	203	4
Hillingdon Primary Academy	632	633	628	-4
Highlees Primary School	374	377	379	5
Hollywood		401	421	421
John Locke Academy	585	586	600	15
Kings Norton	400	401	400	0
Kings Rise Academy	371	396	410	39
Millfield Primary	348	348	370	22
Nene Infant and Nursery School	222	248	232	10
Netherbrook	411	410	416	5
Parkfield Primary School	379	377	402	23
Pinkwell Primary School	542	547	591	49
Ramnoth Junior School	315	321	332	17
Ramsey Infants	203	195	204	1
Ramsey Juniors	240	261	278	38
Rounds Green	368	345	349	-19
Shireland Hall Primary Academy	608	627	630	22
The Shirestone Academy	209	211	209	0
The Hyde School	419	412	420	1
Tiverton Primary Academy	203	203	202	-1
Westwood Primary School	779	798	771	-8
Woods Bank Primary Academy	357	347	350	-7
	12560	13074	13179	619

The Finance Workbook however doesn't include any future pupil number forecasting, this is held locally. So, whilst overall the pupil numbers look fairly strong, there are some outliers for whom further scrutiny is needed. The Trust reports that this is undertaken via the meetings with HT/Principals who are asked to develop a plan for addressing any falling-roll issues. In particular this is applicable to Griffin, Claremont and Rounds Green primary schools which would warrant some further analysis either locally or centrally on their falling rolls (n.b. Griffin which has seen 21% drop in pupil numbers over this three-year period).

One factor which is undoubtedly affecting both pupil cohort needs and numbers as well as the long-term financial sustainability of the Trust, is the high level of SEN need and the number of EHCPs held by TEFAT pupils. In response to this, the Trust has developed 'Team Purple' which has a self-directing level of autonomy with the Trust and reports feeling a sense of agency within TEFAT and local leaders report that the team brings added value to the work of the individual schools.

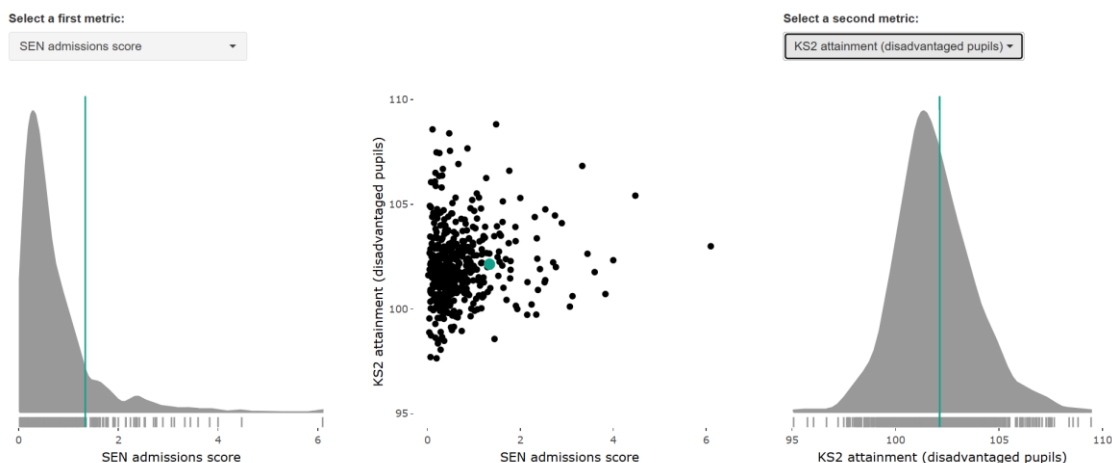
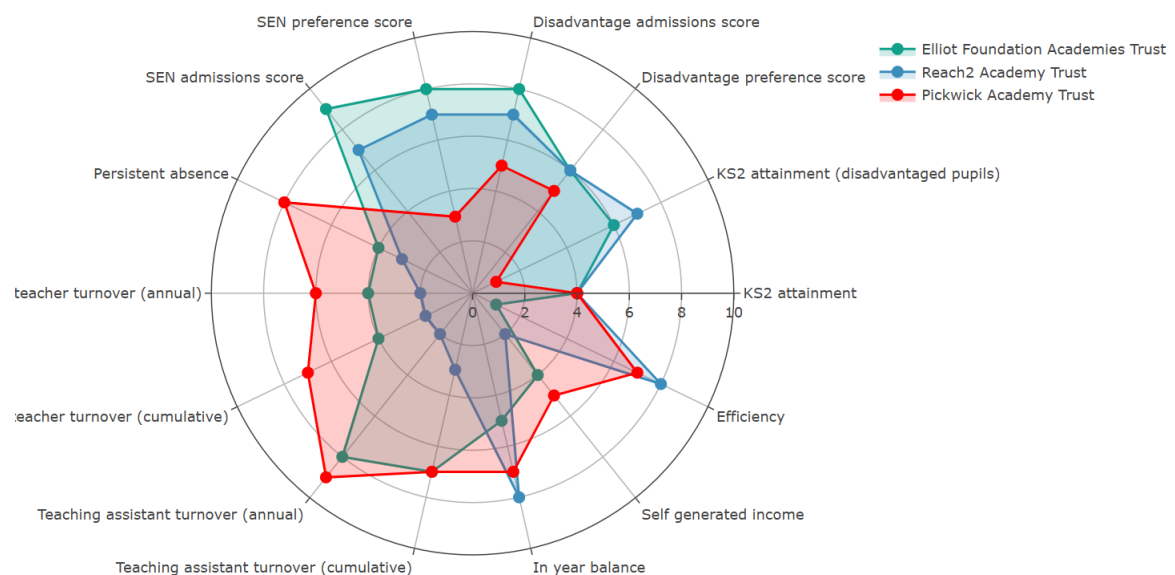
Each region has a SEND lead and to give a sense of the rate of this increase in this

area, in 2020 these posts were one day a week posts but now the Trust invests 3FTE of resource in this area along with 1FTE for a SEND case officer. These are all outstanding SEND practitioners that are on the ground in schools to help improve practice, drive training and also lead the SEND forums. 1x 1fte SEND case officer.

In addition to the number of pupils in the mainstream provision with additional SEN need TEFAT also currently run five resource provisions:

- Billesley School – ASC resource base (Birmingham).
- Hollywood School – ASC resource base (Birmingham).
- Childs Hill School – ASC resource base (LB Barnet).
- Claremont School – ASC resource base (LB Barnet).
- Pinkwell Primary School – Speech and Language Specialist Resource Provision (LB Hillingdon).

To benchmark TEFAT's activity in this area some data from the Education Policy Institute has been reviewed. Below are two graphs, the first shows the Trust benchmarked against two other primary only Academy Trusts. The second shows the Trust against all other Trusts cross-referencing the 'SEN admission score' against 'KS2 Attainment disadvantaged pupils'.



From this data it can clearly be seen that TEFAT have more than average number of SEN pupils and yet deliver a better than average set of outcomes for all pupils especially those defined as disadvantaged pupils. TEFAT should feel proud of the outcomes it achieves and should be regarded as providing some examples of exemplary practice that some other setting may be able to learn from.

Currently the Trust operates across 14 local authority areas which all have their own methodology of funding SEN and EHCP provision. This makes understanding, forecasting and reconciling the finances in this area more challenging. On the Finance Workbook there is a tab that allows for calculation and tracking from a profit/loss point of view for ARPs or nursery provisions. This data is not always completed by the schools locally and so it may be useful for the Trust to review this tab fully to ensure full data is being captured in this area and the Trust are able to forecast the cost pressures more accurately.

Team Purple is focusing on trying to bring the standard of SEN practice up in all schools. By identifying both good and bad practice TEFAT make sure that staff feel supported and able to be successful and thrive in the SEN work they undertake. The Trust has an internal three-year training programme relating to behaviour management which forms part of the agreed priority within the Trust Educational Plan. Local SENCO's help to operationalise the adaptive teaching practice, curriculum planning and the full curriculum offer.

There is a behaviour management programme (JOGO) in place across the Trust (procured by central services) which is supported by thorough policy making. The Trust is now tracking interventions with new provision mapping software which shows what the interventions are, how much they cost and what impact they are having. TEFAT strengthen this work further through external commissioning of specialists to develop curriculum design and specific provisions such as art therapy. The Trust is now looking at how they can bring therapy provision up to a more systemic level and create a regional system.

#### **Dip Sample**

Pupil number forecast data is sent to the school by each local authority which gives a 3-5yr look ahead. All schools have different situations, some have growing rolls due to strong reputation or local developments. When a school has declining numbers there is much more involvement of senior officers from Central Services including SEN support, legal and governance as well as finance and HR. These conversations are structured through the GR, team and individual supervision meetings.

### **1.2.3 Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP)**

The Trust does benchmark its schools internally and quite extensively. This is mainly done via the data held on the Finance Workbook. The benchmarking of contracts is mainly financial in nature with assessment of under-performance being more of a qualitative conversation with local leaders. Some exceptional practice has been identified at this Trust regarding the way in which they assess their income against some of the ICFP metric areas. This will be explored in more detail later in this report



[illegible]

**Dip Sample**

Local leaders report looking at the Financial Workbook periodically (every few weeks) to see where the money is being spent and where there is potential to redirect resources to meet changing need. The Business Partners (BP) will visit schools twice every half-term and will go through the Financial Workbook scrutinising in depth and an SLT finance meeting is scheduled locally every half-term. E.g. in one school's recent meeting, the BP highlighted that spending on educational support staff was high and the school is reviewing this area over the coming term to assess what if any changes are needed for the next financial year

Individual schools don't always look at their spending in comparison to other schools but this is done by the Regional Directors. External benchmarking data is also used and best practice is shared within regional team meetings but not necessarily across the different regional areas.

The vast majority of schools in the Trust are graded as Good or Outstanding with the three that currently have Requires Improvement judgements having only joined in either 2023 or 2024 and showing good signs of improvement. Bespoke planning and conversations (in addition to the standard communications) are held with these schools.

V8.0 Nov 22



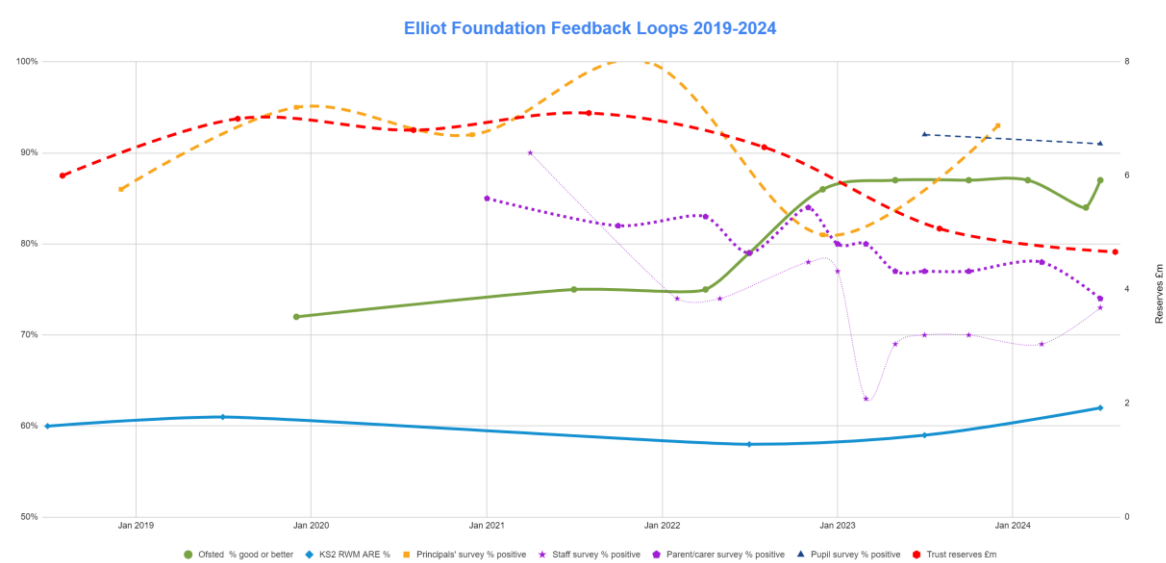
monitored through regular supervision meetings with the HT/Principals and also through team meetings.

For example, Shireland Hall Primary was reviewed in more depth and has an SDP in place with identified costed priorities for the school identified (in this case it centres around initiatives for English). The school plans on a three-year rolling basis and seeks to place the quality of the curriculum at the heart of decision making. This can be challenging as the school doesn't know what the incoming priorities might need to look like for the Early Years cohort, but discussions are held both locally and centrally through the year to ensure dynamic decision making. These plans will also include priorities for estate issues which the Director of Estates is involved in setting and monitoring.

On top of this, through the Regional Structure the Trust sets regionally defined priorities. In the regional review these were defined as being increasing teaching standards (and prep for Ofsted as a number of the schools in that region are expecting their inspections); recruitment of staff; managing the impact of maternity leave on the budget position and staff leaving. Work to address these priorities is locally led and so some schools may make more progress than others but best practice and any lessons learnt are shared through regional meetings.

TEFAT have a robust stakeholder and feedback mechanism to understand what staff, pupils and parents/carers feel about their performance. The Trust also commissions an external provider to consult with HT/Principals to ensure that authentic feedback is given. This engagement is periodic but frequent and the data collected forms part of the data that is shared with school leaders and used dynamically in-year to make changes and ensure successful outcomes are achieved.

This data is then presented to the Board, independently of Central Trust services and is used alongside other data to give indicators of what is working and what might need more work. In the diagram below an example of how this data is presented with trends over time can be seen.



Dip Sample

SDP are in place locally and focused on standards and evidencing this to all stakeholders including Ofsted. Individual school priorities are set by HT/Principals in consultation with RDs and often focus on specific areas for improvement such as early phonics, a changing trend in pupil need or built environment challenges. Local leaders reported feeling a sense of supported autonomy and ownership over the setting of individual school priorities. There are also priorities set regionally by the RDs which increasingly focus on challenges with recruitment and retention and developing strategic relationship management with external keyholders.

### **1.3 Contracts and Procurement (Buying for Schools)**

Procurement and contract management is a mix of centrally and locally held functions and depends on current arrangements and what's in the best interest of the individual school i.e. some schools when they joined will have some working practices in place. Whereas the majority of the longer standing schools will likely have more aligned systems to those supported by the central services.

Services and products in the areas of finance, estate management and aspects of IT support (RM) along with statutory compliance tend to be more directly managed by the Central Services team. Where contracts have been centrally procured the contract owner is the director of that department and will monitor service delivery against the contract specifications.

Locally, schools can procure packages bespoke to their needs, but here still, the Trust seeks to promote best practice, and through joint procurement secure the best deal for their schools. (E.g. Little Wandle supporting phonics is a centrally procured and offered system but schools don't have to use this – although they are asked to justify why the system they wish to use instead is better than the centrally offered service).

Contract management itself depends on positive communication as some contracts are managed by an individual school, some by a region/cluster and some by the Trust. Regardless of this though, through both the Central Services systems and the dialogue, challenge and support offered through the Regional Director structure these systems are scrutinised and quality assured. The Trust does insist on all schools using the same MIS however and this is in the final stages of being re-procured.

The Trust has just invested in the purchase of a Lightspeed Digital Insights which reports on websites being accessed by users and what is being procured online. The area of IT services and procurement is currently a focus for the Trust and there are a number of initiatives in this area. For example, TEFAT have established a new filtering and monitoring system and are championing schools moving their operational systems onto the cloud. Currently 10 schools have signed up to this and the Trust is seeing better management and lower costs in this area for schools that have embraced this change.

The centrally procured IT technical and infrastructure support service led by RM has recently made a number of change improvements and those schools that don't have cloud-based services are seeing that they still need more on-site support and have higher hardware costs. There are six other third party suppliers currently operating

across TEFAT schools and some still have directly employed in-house ICT support. The main savings in this area are realised through staff cost reductions and some contract management cost reductions.

Catering is a mixed arrangement too and utilises local strengths where possible. Some TEFAT schools have grouped together to address their service needs in this area. Currently, approximately half of the schools use Dolce whilst the others are a mix of other third-party providers and in-house provision (c.6).

Similarly cleaning contracts are a mix too with some being managed locally and some by the central services team. Five London schools procured cleaning services collectively through the ESPO framework. The majority of schools though have chosen to outsource directly. The central services team also support quality assurance work across all schools in this area.

The Trust also seeks to centrally procure a number of other services. These include:

- Utilities – this is delivered via Drax and SEFE and is one of the few areas that is not optional for the schools. All new schools once they come off of their existing contract will then roll across to join the central contract. The Trust has access to usage and cost profiles for each school to allow for accurate monitoring and benchmarking.
- Some energy initiatives are also procured centrally such as the recently installed LED lighting in all schools which was entirely funded by the central fund (£800k). The Trust forecast that they will receive a return on this investment within 4 to 5 yrs.
- A consistent broadband contract is now in place and on expiry there is the expectation that all schools will come across to the new contract.
- IT licenses have been reviewed and where possible have been jointly procured.
- The PPM central contract is with 3D which provides for central compliance to ensure legal requirements are fulfilled. RLB have a procurement option within the contract to provide remedial works.
- Kyocera is the centrally procured photocopier/printing contract offered to all schools which has about 80% take-up from TEFAT schools with the others having local contracts that are locally managed. This central contract has the ability to scrutinise print costs and aid strong management.
- All bar one school uses the RPA (the one that doesn't have a better deal via Zurich).

Evidence was reviewed as part of this deployment that showed thorough analysis being completed by the Trust for areas of expenditure like utilities and broadband as well as payroll costs. This demonstrates that the Trust's decision making is evidence based and inclusive of all schools. The advocating of best value but not insisting that all schools have the same approach to delivery should be seen as best practice as it balances the autonomy of the settings versus the Trust's need to ensure value for money.

Where contracts are being managed locally the Central Services Team won't necessarily know if the contract is performing well but the proactive and strong relationships that exist within the Trust with their local leadership, means the Trust has

not experienced problems like this not being known. HT and Principal will come to Central Services team for advice and discuss their situation.

The Trust holds a very robust contracts register centrally. This information is shared with schools via a tab on the financial workbooks. Some of this data however relies on the schools themselves populating the spreadsheet and this information is not always complete. All leases have to be signed off by FD and any contract of major procurement activity (above £10k) is done either via the finance team or with their involvement.

Within the Trust capital plan there is flexibility to move spending around to address identified priorities. These decisions are made in partnership with schools but the Trust has the ability to swiftly address emerging problems within their estate.

#### **Dip Sample**

Local leaders reported that through the regional meetings, regular discussions are held to see if there are opportunities for the cluster of schools to jointly commission services/products or bring funding together to address region wide service delivery problems. Regional clusters don't currently assess opportunities for submitting joint funding applications to external sources of funding due to time constraints.

### **1.4 HR and Recruitment Procurement**

There is a scheme of delegation in place at TEFAT for actions that have a financial impact such as recruitment. The responsibility for hiring and dismissing staff is delegated to HT/Principals with the central HR service providing advice and support as well as fulfilling the monitoring and challenging role for the Trust. As mentioned previously there are processes in place (which are quality assured) for things such as approval to recruit.

The Trust explained that this two-person sign off process is not necessarily there to counter a local school led decision about recruitment but through prompting HT/Principals to think more creatively, the Trust ensures that they get as close as possible to a balanced budget each year. This previously used to be needed for all posts, but this has been scaled back and streamlined so that school now only need to follow this process for posts not in the budget or when there is a need to recruit more expensive posts.

HT/Principals report that they feel trusted to make decisions locally and are well supported by the Trust (through the Regional Team and Business Partner structures) in dealing with more serious/complicated HR issues. Whilst operational HR matters are dealt with locally, they are quality assured centrally and any issues picked up on. This approach results in staffing structures being different from school-to-school but this is believed to be a strength for the Trust as it allows local context to drive decision making rather than a one-size-fits all top-down decision process. Due to the different skills and structures in place, some schools will have stronger HR functions than others. The Trust encourages collaboration and this happens both on an ad-hoc school-to-school level but also more systemically through the regional structures.

TEFAT have a number of interesting initiatives within the HR functions that help to

improve practice and retain quality staff:

- Expert Teacher programme – which identifies great teaching and learning and seeks to replicate this practice in other schools.
- Expert Practitioner scheme is an expansion of the Expert Teacher scheme and is designed to recognise expert practice within the support teams. It draws upon the skills and experience within individual schemes being utilised across the cluster for the most amount of benefit without incurring more costs.
- Regional Estate leaders which sees one person in each cluster (an existing site manager that will undertake regional work one day a week), enhancing the estate related support that TEFAT offers to schools. This has helped with career progression and development.
- Cross school/regional collaboration – using senior teachers within the Trust to address any urgent need, particularly with reference to teaching standards and pupil outcomes.
- Regional Directors have a delegated budget for school improvement and the RD has discretion as to how the money is spent based on the highest/most urgent needs. This often results in additional staffing being made available (normally on a fixed term basis) and this could come from staff in other settings or new recruits. This work links back to school improvement plans and local conversations.

The Trust's strategy on Recruitment and Retention (R&R) is led by the central services HR team but goes across the whole Trust. The Central Services HR Team spend roughly 70% of their time on supporting individual schools with operational matters and 30% on policy and strategic development work. The current plan focuses on positioning TEFAT as the employer of choice in order to attract talent, and a robust and evidence based CPD programme to aid the retention of talent. Currently HT/Principals define who should go on a route to teaching or individual development plans.

One of the biggest current challenges for the Trust is retention with 83% of support staff coming in with less than 2yrs continual LA service. This is monitored by the central services and the data shared with the schools via the Finance Workbook. The table below shows the most recent data in this area.

Student data	Staff turnover
Billesley Primary School	11.6%
Cavalry Primary School	25.2%
Chandos Primary School	4.3%
Childs Hill	11.4%
Cippenham School	22.8%
Claremont Primary School	35.6%
Croft Academy	7.4%
Elm Road Primary School	13.1%
Eyrescroft Primary School	9.0%
George Betts	11.3%
Greenside Primary School	20.7%
Griffin Primary School	58.3%
Highlees Primary School	16.2%
Hillingdon Primary School	17.4%
Hollywood	0.0%
John Locke Academy	8.2%
Kings Rise Academy	15.0%
Millfield Primary School	16.5%
Nene	16.0%
Netherbrook	8.9%
Parkfield Primary School	15.8%
Pinkwell Primary School	29.8%
Ramnoth Junior School	9.8%
Ramsey Junior School	34.3%
Ramsey Spinning	29.9%
Rounds Green	24.0%
Shireland Hall	15.5%
The Hyde School	15.0%
The Shirestone Academy	16.4%
Tiverton Academy	17.5%
Westwood Primary School	25.0%
Woods Bank	15.3%
Trust Average	18.03%

The Trust reports that work on their R&R strategy is work that is still in the early stages and they are currently in the data and discovery phase. They are looking to see where they sit nationally (current analysis does not suggest they are doing worse than other similar Trusts) and are refining their engagement processes around what staff would actually want to see from the Trust in this area. The Trust has recently changed its payroll provider moving to MHR from EPM. They now use MHR's iTrent system for HR information management which interfaces with their business objective work.

The Trust relies on the data inputted into the HR system/Finance Workbook by their schools. They have plans to develop these systems to enable more in-depth analysis of success rates for R&R and to identify any trends or hotspots. That said they have improved their systems of late and can now better interrogate existing staff cohort

data e.g. length of service and where they are in their career journey.

TEFAT speak to all stakeholder regularly and this includes staff. The Trust have regular and annual questionnaires sent out and the outcomes from this are shared with schools. In addition to this, the Trust has also run staff voice sessions where they met with staff from all different job areas (teachers, TA, admin etc.) in every school and any insights are fed up to the Board and are factored into Trust wide plans. This also includes data and insights from the Trust wide exit questionnaires.

At present the main issues identified as affecting R&R work are:

- Outer London schools having to offer Outer London pay scales but geographically they are very close to inner London and therefore are having to compete with those rates being higher.
- Attracting ECT's specifically in rural settings is challenging. Not being able to recruit this type of new staff member will result in an escalation of their average teacher cost.
- Least experienced staff coming into the organisation are going into the child facing roles and so both now and over time this could present a risk to the organisation.
- Processes around spotting talent at an early stage needs more work.

As mentioned, the Trust offers a robust CPD programme which is a mixture of centrally defined content (e.g. some of the SEN training) and locally defined. As an organisation TEFAT hold Apprenticeship Provider status and currently run development programme Level 1,2,3 qualification programmes for teaching assistants as well as entry grade business and administration staff. They partner with other providers to offer the QTS route.

The Trust has a strong belief in and commitment to growing their own staff (as a multi-discipline continuum) as they feel this is not only ethically correct for an education provider but also assists with the retention of staff. As part of developing this area of work TEFAT are working up career pathways for all job roles to enable all employees to see a future for themselves at the Trust and take more ownership of developing themselves over time.

Currently there are a lot of informal quality assurance processes which include peer-to-peer reviews as part of the Progress Partners Programme which is completed by external consultants and is paid for via the regional education budget. TEFAT is currently reviewing this data to ensure that it's focused on the right areas and gives them like-for-like comparator data.

Although day-to-day HR work is undertaken locally all HR Statutory Compliance work is led by central HR. All employment contracts are held on a Trust wide database. This includes monthly quality assurance of the Single Central Record (by comparing it to the payroll names); annual cross reference check of SCR against personnel files; periodic dip sampling of HR files; spot checks on contractual arrangements with volunteers and contractors.

The organisation of cover arrangements is something which is managed locally and there are metrics on this (in the Finance Workbook) that are updated monthly and

reviewed by both Regional Directors and the HR team centrally. Cover arrangements change from school to school and local partnerships and the quality of those relationships mean that different charge rates operate and so present different levels of value to each school and the Trust as a whole.

The Trust feel that overall, their cover bill is high and they would like to look at ways to address this. They are aware that this issue is one that has the potential to fall between the decision makers as the central team will look at the R&R angle whilst schools are more driven by the local pressing need to find staff and balance budgets.

It might be beneficial for the Trust to look to form a partnership on an organisational level with a national provider of agency staff. This could be done in the same way as some of the other centrally procured services are offered – i.e. as an option not a directive to use this additional service. These may have the added benefit of driving other ‘in-kind’ added value to what the schools are doing (e.g. CV writing for parents).

Platforms for advertising job vacancies also varies from school to school (e.g. Crinkle platform for education recruitment works well for TEFAT’s Hillingdon schools). The Trust tried buying Eteach on behalf of all schools but that didn’t work as the geographical spread of the schools meant there are different factors affecting its effectiveness. Some schools still purchase this but schools make this decision now locally.

#### **Dip Sample**

All staff decisions and management are completed locally including arrangements for cover and the strategic planning is also driven by local needs analysis. Schools do not currently work collaboratively to cover short- or long-term absence. It could be beneficial for some schools to explore this option where geographically they are close enough together to make it sensible to do so. Staffing trends are reviewed periodically (including staff absence trends) and this is supported by the HR central team. Some schools have developed a local outreach presence with SLT to create consultancy income

Staff survey responses are used to pick up on key points for response/focus by a school and these are discussed with RDs in GR/GR+ meetings. Most schools that have joined the Trust recently have been on, or are still on, a journey. There have been some problems with cultural alignment with new schools, but the Trust focuses on knowing their communities and having transparent direct conversations.

### **1.5 Ongoing Trust/School Led Efficiency Initiatives**

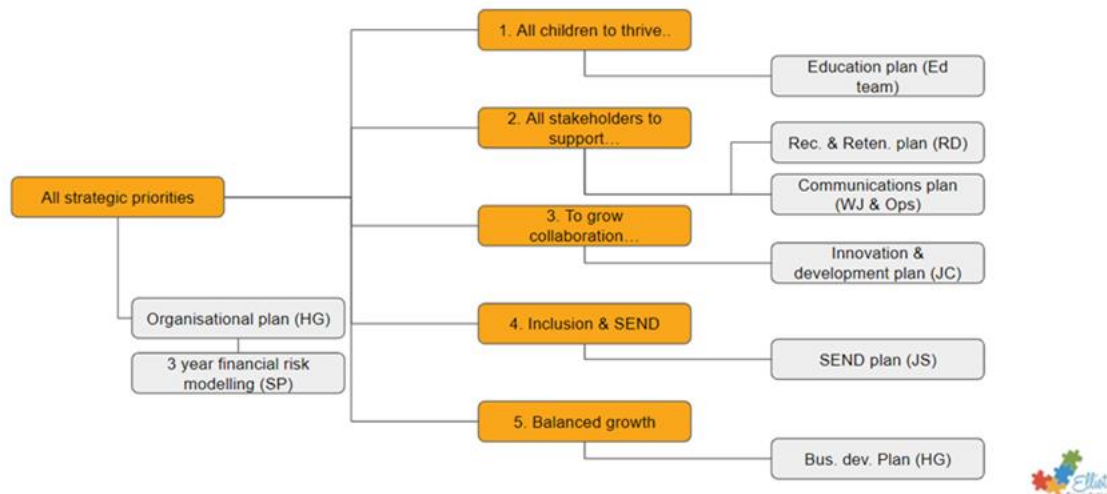
The Trust has a robust development plan which is costed and has distributed action points across both centrally employed staff and local school leaders. Numerous examples of the different initiatives both in terms of cost reduction and effectiveness improvement have been mentioned through this report. The summary of this strategic development plan is shown below.



# 2023-27 strategic review

Purpose	Vision	Strategy	Sustainability	KPIs
<p>Advancing for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom</p> <p>Promoting the physical, intellectual and social development of children especially those who are socially and economically disadvantaged</p> <p>Relieving poverty and advancing health</p>	<p>The Elliot Foundation was created as a safe space for children and teachers where all are nurtured to achieve beyond even their own expectations.</p> <p>Our motto, "Where children believe they can because teachers know they can", reflects our conviction that raising expectations for all children and teachers is at the heart of a successful and more inclusive society.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All children to thrive, whatever their chosen path, with confidence, curiosity and commitment</li> <li>2. All stakeholders to support the Trust because they are valued and included</li> <li>3. To grow productive local, regional and national collaborations</li> <li>4. To put inclusion and support for SEND at the heart of all our schools</li> <li>5. To deliver balanced growth to 40+ schools</li> </ol>	<p>All plans supporting strategic priorities to contain a sustainability element to support the Trust's 'Net Zero' commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # schools</li> <li>• # children</li> <li>• % Ofsted &gt;= 'Good'</li> <li>• GLD, KS1, KS2</li> <li>• Measurements of broad curriculum</li> <li>• ~0 exclusions</li> <li>• Stakeholders &gt;80% positive feedback</li> <li>• % staff turnover</li> <li>• % rev spent 'between' schools</li> <li>• # 'unfunded' EHCPs</li> <li>• % reserves</li> <li>• Additional KPIs to be added as subordinate plans completed</li> </ul>

## Strategic priorities & supporting plans



In order to be successful in their strategy, the Executive Team and Board members take a robust approach to managing strategic Risk. As shown in the table below, TEFAT has an exceptionally strong risk register which identifies areas of concern holistically and this work feeds into ongoing Trust efficiency work. This is scrutinised by the Board and the Executive leadership team.

School name	School region	Safeguarding	Education	Finance	HR	Estates	IT	Governance	School
<b>Billesley Primary School</b>	West Mids.	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.3	2.3	2.0	1.0	1.4
<b>Cavalry Primary School</b>	East Anglia	1.3	2.3	2.0	2.0	1.3	2.0	1.3	1.8
<b>Chandos Primary School</b>	West Mids.	1.3	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.7	1.9
<b>Childs Hill</b>	London	1.0	2.5	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.3	1.8
<b>Cippenham School</b>	London	1.3	2.7	1.8	2.3	2.3	2.7	1.3	2.1
<b>Claremont Primary School</b>	London	1.3	2.7	1.8	2.3	2.3	2.3	1.3	2.0
<b>Croft Academy</b>	West Mids.	1.0	2.5	1.0	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6
<b>Elm Road Primary School</b>	East Anglia	1.3	2.5	1.3	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.8
<b>Eyrescroft Primary School</b>	East Anglia	1.3	2.3	1.8	2.0	1.7	2.0	2.0	1.9
<b>George Betts</b>	West Mids.	1.0	1.8	1.3	1.7	2.3	2.0	1.0	1.6
<b>Greenside Primary School</b>	London	1.0	2.3	1.5	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.3	1.9
<b>Griffin Primary School</b>	London	1.0	2.7	1.8	2.7	3.0	2.0	1.3	2.1
<b>Highlees Primary School</b>	East Anglia	1.3	2.3	1.8	2.0	1.7	2.3	1.3	1.8
<b>Hillingdon Primary School</b>	London	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.7	2.0	2.3	1.0	1.5
<b>Hollywood</b>	West Mids.	1.0	3.5	1.5	3.0	2.7	3.0	2.3	2.4
<b>John Locke Academy</b>	London	1.3	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.3	1.8
<b>Kings Norton</b>	West Mids.	1.3	2.7	1.8	2.3	2.3	3.0	1.7	2.2
<b>Kings Rise Academy</b>	West Mids.	1.3	2.2	1.0	2.0	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.5
<b>Millfield Primary School</b>	East Anglia	1.0	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.6
<b>Nene</b>	East Anglia	1.3	2.2	1.3	2.0	2.0	2.3	1.3	1.8
<b>Netherbrook</b>	West Mids.	1.0	2.5	1.5	2.3	2.0	2.3	1.7	1.9
<b>Parkfield Primary School</b>	London	1.3	2.8	1.3	1.7	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.8
<b>Pinkwell Primary School</b>	London	1.3	3.3	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.2
<b>Ramoth Junior School</b>	East Anglia	1.0	2.3	1.3	1.7	2.0	2.3	1.3	1.7
<b>Ramsey Junior School</b>	East Anglia	1.0	2.0	1.8	2.3	2.0	2.3	1.7	1.9
<b>Ramsey Spinning</b>	East Anglia	1.3	2.5	1.8	2.3	2.0	2.3	1.7	2.0
<b>Rounds Green</b>	West Mids.	1.3	2.7	1.5	2.3	1.7	3.0	1.3	2.0
<b>Shireland Hall</b>	West Mids.	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.7	1.7	2.0	1.0	1.4
<b>The Hyde School</b>	London	1.3	1.0	1.8	1.7	1.7	2.0	1.7	1.6
<b>The Shirestone Academy</b>	West Mids.	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.7	2.0	1.3	1.6
<b>Tiverton Academy</b>	West Mids.	1.3	2.0	1.3	2.0	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.8
<b>Westwood Primary School</b>	East Anglia	1.3	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.3	1.7	2.0
<b>Woods Bank</b>	West Mids.	1.3	2.7	1.0	2.3	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.7

### Dip Sample

Schools leaders reported that they often access the benefit of centrally introduced initiatives and are consulted on what might be needed via the Business Partner process/conversations. They also report that school introduced initiatives receive an appropriate amount of challenge and the focus of the conversation is about the impact of the spending decision on outcomes for children rather than the financial value in its own right. Local leaders state that strong relationships between Regional Directors and school leaders help drive improvement and find efficiencies.

## PART 2: Data and Evidence

### 2.1 Analysis of the Overall Financial Position

The current financial position of the Trust is moderately strong and relatively stable despite the aforementioned level of additional needs of many of TEFAT pupils. It has a total annual revenue income of £103.98m with a free reserve position of £4.95m. The reserve position is held centrally but allocated against each school is the

cumulative contribution that it has made. The table below shows the current allocations of reserve alongside the 2024/25 budgeted position of each individual school and the Trust as a whole.

	Budget 24/25			Reserves at Aug 2024	Core Schools Budget Grant 24-25
	Income	Expenditure	Balance		
<u>Stand alone academies</u>					
Billesley Primary School	5,134,195	5,107,225	26,970	784,747	123,146
Cavalry Primary School	2,780,179	2,757,018	23,161	40,503	74,439
Chandos Primary School	3,185,978	3,178,265	7,713	-50,612	82,987
Cippenham Primary	5,884,894	5,716,620	168,274	496,086	164,765
Croft Academy	1,904,746	1,955,661	-50,915	181,552	46,702
Elm Road Primary School	1,430,282	1,414,828	15,454	200,206	40,788
Griffin Primary School	1,704,833	1,755,435	-50,602	370,545	41,097
Greenside Primary School	1,913,674	1,854,284	59,390	384,233	45,129
Hillingdon Primary Academy	4,580,968	4,545,615	35,353	93,363	113,337
Hollywood Primary Academy	2,971,105	2,955,529	15,576	367,981	77,613
John Locke Academy	3,969,657	4,022,988	-53,331	-765	97,702
Kings Norton Primary	2,645,595	2,644,051	1,544	-74	73,663
Kings Rise Academy	3,394,930	3,394,221	709	228,380	88,087
Millfield Primary	2,293,393	2,293,393	0	329,860	60,876
Netherbrook Primary	3,050,658	3,047,974	2,684	46,390	78,405
Parkfield Primary School	3,266,938	3,264,100	2,838	-46,668	74,859
Pinkwell Primary School	4,594,474	4,486,981	107,493	-604,121	117,936
Rounds Green Primary	2,482,675	2,538,629	-55,954	-601	65,309
The Shirestone Academy	1,755,997	1,770,986	-14,989	70,588	46,524
The Hyde School	3,394,524	3,462,767	-68,243	172,100	77,573
Tiverton Primary Academy	1,518,596	1,510,638	7,958	72,153	40,310
Valley Primary School					90,487
Westwood Primary School	4,744,051	4,729,574	14,477	256,039	138,321
Woods Bank Primary Academy	2,878,787	2,878,617	170	145,657	78,446
Total	71,481,129	71,285,399	195,730	3,537,542	1,938,499
<u>Federated Academies</u>					
Childs Hill Primary	3,666,759	3,580,647	86,112	-267,999	82,104
Claremont Primary	2,600,113	2,665,659	-65,546	-318,771	60,269
Total	6,266,872	6,246,306	20,566	-586,770	142,373
Eyrescroft Primary School	1,881,655	1,974,856	-93,201	-225,664	53,225
Highlees Primary School	2,678,432	2,618,803	59,629	571,004	74,763
Total	4,560,087	4,593,659	-33,572	345,340	127,989
George Betts Primary Academy	2,812,826	2,812,826	0	56,144	72,497
Shireland Hall Primary Academy	4,478,176	4,478,176	0	277,606	108,672
Total	7,291,002	7,291,002	0	333,750	181,169
Nene Infant and Nursery School	2,084,370	2,070,748	13,622	494,295	44,422
Ramnoth Junior School	2,300,392	2,281,600	18,792	448,566	66,744
Total	4,384,762	4,352,348	32,414	942,861	111,166
Ramsey Juniors	1,799,111	1,799,111	0	288,367	60,624
Ramsey Infants	1,324,135	1,324,135	0	14,039	39,387
Total	3,123,246	3,123,246	0	302,406	100,011
Total Academies	97,107,098	96,891,960	215,138	4,875,129	2,601,207
Head Office (Revenue)	4,733,228	4,671,410	61,818	78,354	0
Head Office (Capital)	2,135,370	2,135,370	0		
Total Trust	103,975,696	103,698,740	276,956	4,953,483	2,601,207

Year	Income	Expenditure	Balance
2021-22	£ 91,839,000	£ 90,279,000	£ 1,560,000
2022-23	£ 91,377,000	£ 93,698,000	-£ 2,321,000
2023-24	£ 97,536,287	£ 97,917,221	-£ 380,935
2024-25	£ 103,975,696	£ 103,698,740	£ 276,956

As shown in the table above, using the financial data provided, the majority of the financial pressure on the Trust stems from the 2022/23 financial year. Firstly, the educational support staff pay award which was not matched by the uplift in funding placed a huge pressure on the budget as the Trust, with its focus on SEND pupils and inclusion, have more than the average number of these types of staff in their schools. (E.g. Claremont and Childs Hill schools have deficits that are clearly linked to SEN provision.) Secondly, the Trust's utilities contract ended in October 2022 which was the worst time for this contract to come to an end and the cost base for utilities alone escalated to c.£4m. This meant that TEFAT posted a significant outturn deficit for 22/23 year almost solely due to these two issues.

This year's budget has been reforecast to include the Core School Budget Grant which has made a material improvement to the Trusts position, and it is now forecasting a modest in-year surplus. Below is shown the BFR three-year forecast for the Trust which shows a net surplus over this period of c£200k. Given the level of change and uncertainty about national and regional funding arrangements these figures could change materially in that time. This is an ongoing point of focus for the financial management of the Trust and the work of the Central Finance team particularly.

### Three year forecast

#### Revenue

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
1990 - DfE grant income	86191	90522	93250
2500 - Other income	14947	16004	16580
2530 - Surplus/deficit transfer into trust on conversion or transfer	400	0	0
2550 - Transfer revenue to capital	-300	-250	-250
2980 - Subtotal income	101238	106276	109580
3100 - Staff costs	82918	87696	90500
3300 - Other costs	17664	18730	19380
3800 - Subtotal costs	100582	106426	109880
3900 - Assumed pay awards for teaching staff (% rate)	3	3	3
3950 - Assumed pay awards for support staff (% rate)	3	3	3
4000 - Revenue net	656	-150	-300

In the table below is shown the reserve position over time for TEFAT. Current forecasts show the expected reserve position for the Trust at the end of this current financial year is c.£5.3m. The Trust has an aim to increase their reserve position towards £6m in the following financial year(s). Leaders at the Trust explain this aim will be balanced with the reality of managing the 33 schools in their organisation and

weighing the competing claims on finite financial resources, both from a day-to-day operational spending point of view and a longer-term investment and capital stance. Conversation with executive leaders and Board members at the Trust demonstrates their experience and engenders confidence in their capabilities and capacity to achieve this.

Trust total	Balance at 31 Aug 22	Balance at 31 Mar 23	Balance at 31 Aug 23	Balance at 31 Mar 24	Balance at 31 Aug 24	Balance at 31 Mar 25	Balance at 31 Aug 25
1000 - Centrally held reserves	6563	3640	5054	1426	4677	2841	5333

## 2.2 Commentary on Key Metrics

The Trust already has numerous systems for monitoring spending and benchmarking. Whilst this is not fully reflective of the ICFP process seen in tools such as ISOT/ASOT, it is highly bespoke to TEFAT and is embedded in the monitoring and evaluation work the Trust undertakes. It is also well known to all local and central leaders. TEFAT should be commended for developing a bespoke evidence-based system of holistic organisational health monitoring.

For this reason, it was decided that it would be most helpful to the Trust, and most appropriate for this deployment, to adapt this section of the report to critique TEFAT's existing processes rather than shoehorning them into the prescribed ICFP model stemming from other sources. Data from the DfE's new Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool website will also be brought in to help provide some additional insights and hopefully highlight to the Trust the helpfulness of some of those processes which could be integrated into their existing processes to strengthen their work in this area even further.

As mentioned, numerous times through this report, TEFAT have an excellent document called the Finance Workbook which triangulates a huge amount of information. It brings together academic, financial and stakeholder views (to mention a few) into one dashboard (as shown below) so that both central and local leaders can have a complete overview of any individual schools and at the same time look at how that compares to other schools in the Trust or Region.

In addition to the dashboard shown in 1.2.3, each school has access to some ICFP style metrics which the Trust feel is the most relevant to positive management and ongoing leadership. These are shown below and as can be seen, these mainly focus on financial information and pupil characteristics. This data is very useful for the school/Trust to at-a-glance see some of the main issues affecting the school.

## Croft Academy

### Reserves

Last Year End Reserves	£172,408
Minimum Target Reserves	£88,958
Forecast Reserves	£225,179
Minimum Target Reserves	£94,301

### Rubric evaluations

Financial Health	1
Financial Processes	1
Budget Management	1
Payroll Management	1

### Student Data

PAN	210
October census R-6	203
% Full	96.7%
Pupil premium %	62.00%
EAL %	52.00%
SEN %	21.37%
No. EHCPs	18

### Staffing

Prior Year income % spent on staff	75.72%
Current Year income % spent on staff	75.12%
% staff costs on supply	10.73%
Staff turnover	7.41%
Pupils per teacher	26.52

This information is then broken down further into some more detailed metrics. This time the information for the individual school is shown alongside the Trust averages for that metrics area which helps bring context to the analysis.

### Financial Key Performance Indicators

	Academy	Target Minimum Reserves	Trust Average
<b>Reserves</b>			
Reserves Sept 21	£194,261	£74,878	£216,220
Reserves Sept 22	£146,969	£77,772	£196,104
Reserves Sept 23	£172,408	£88,958	£149,924
Forecast Reserves Sep 24	£225,179	£94,301	£142,983

Staffing	Academy	Trust Average
Staff spend as % of income	75.12%	78.01%
Pupils per teacher	26.52	21.01
Pupils per education support staff member	23.17	32.80
Teacher deployment %	79.5%	82.6%
Average teacher grade	L1	UP2

Expenditure	Academy	Trust Average
Education consumables per pupil	£157.58	£94.20
IT support per pupil	£39.69	£42.95
Water costs per pupil (3 year average)	£18.73	£16.61
Gas costs per m2 (3 year average)	£4.13	£5.20
Electricity costs per m2 (3 year average)	£9.48	£10.69
Gas usage per m2 (kwh 22-23)	69.2	92.7
Electricity usage per m2 (kwh 22-23)	36.7	38.8
Building DEC rating (energy efficiency)	D	D
Maintenance and repairs per m2	£9.51	£11.48
Catering costs per pupil	£316.90	£355.23
Printing costs per pupil	£36.89	£31.26
Photocopies per pupil 22-23	1,685	1,280
Swimming costs per form of entry	£3,610.00	£3,171
Trips subsidy per pupil	£14.75	£13.60

<b>PAN for R-6</b>	210	
<b>Pupil Numbers</b>	Academy	Trust Average
Pupil Roll % full	96.7%	91.4%
Nursery % full	#DIV/0!	83.8%

This data is very helpful to gain a greater understanding of how a school is spending its money particularly against other TEFAT schools. It could be strengthened further by associating targets for each school (including maybe stretch targets) and also building in information on national averages to see how TEFAT schools fare nationally. These targets could be set by the Trust or school but given the culture of the Trust I would expect this to be undertaken in collaboration and jointly agreed upon.

By developing agreed targets in expenditure areas, the Trust would be able to see if the long-term trajectory of costs in the different areas were coming down (or up) to anticipate levels. This would in effect allow the Trust to forecast some budget areas based on percentile expressions despite not knowing fully what level of funding they will receive. This might therefore have the effect of lengthening the forecast window for their schools.

The recently updated DfE Financial Benchmarking website provides a great deal of additional ICFP related analysis of school and academy spending. Below is shown the overall assessment for TEFAT broken down by expenditure types and graded into areas of high, medium and low concern. It may help strengthen the ICFP analysis of the Trust to integrate these eight areas into their standard monitoring information. The current info shown in the table above has displayed this information using m2 or per pupil values which are all relevant and helpful when assessing a school's financial position and this additional data, which could be set up using existing data already held, would sit neatly alongside that and help the Trust to look at the spending patterns of their schools from different points of view.



<https://financial-benchmarking-and-insights-tool.education.gov.uk/trust/08116706>

The site also provides a breakdown of these spending risk categories mapped against each school. As can be seen in the diagram below, seven out of the 33 schools in the Trust account for 32 of the 89 high risk areas identified. There is some degree of correlation here between schools with falling pupil numbers and the number of high risk areas.



#### Primary schools

[Childs Hill Primary School](#)

[Griffin Primary School](#)

[Cippenham School](#)

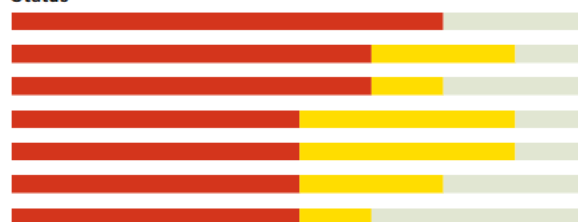
[Greenside Primary School](#)

[The Nene Infant & Nursery School](#)

[Claremont Primary School](#)

[Ramsey Junior School](#)

#### Status



Using the data from the DfE's benchmarking site, a closer look has been given at the highest areas of concern identified to give some further analysis and context to the Trusts current spending. The highest area of concern is administrative supplies with 32 out of 33 schools identified as being in the high concern category. School spending in this area range from £697 to £361 per pupil which is a broad range. It is recommended that the Trust undertake some further analysis on this spending to better understand why spending appears high here and how this might be reduced.

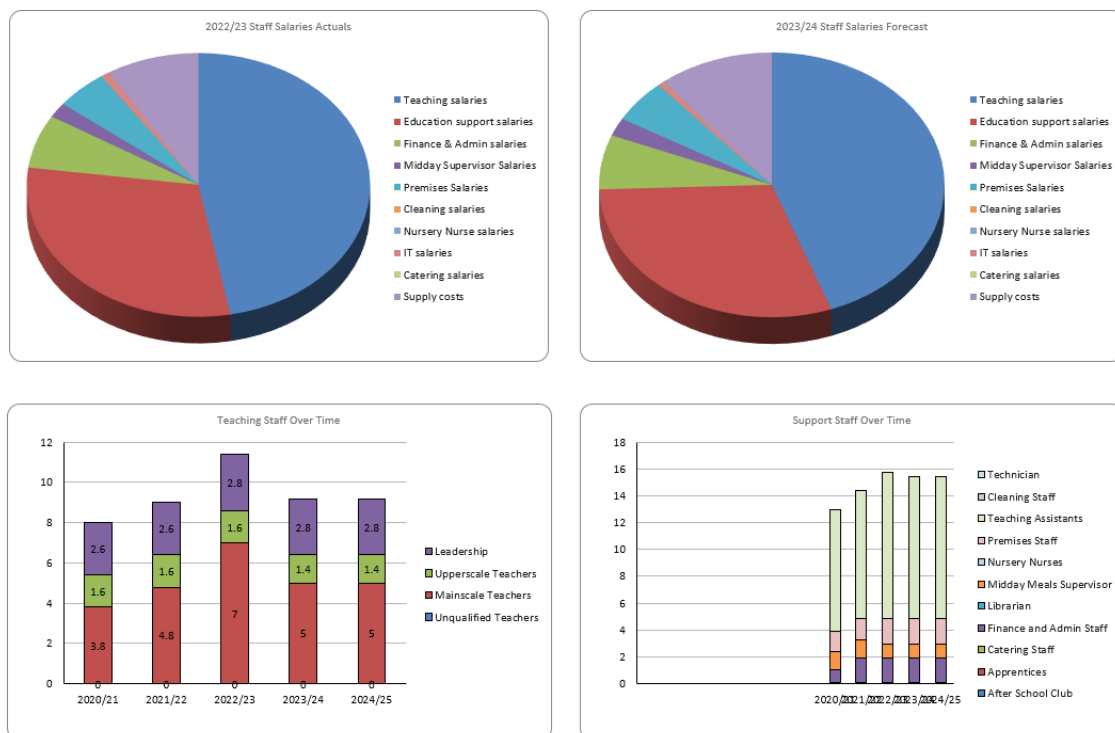
The second area of highest concern using the DfE data set is educational supplies with 18 schools being adjudged as high risk. Conversely though to administrative supplies, these spending patterns are classified as high risk due to spending being lower rather than higher than similar schools. The range here is between £56-£160 per pupil spending with two schools being ranged as low risk spending £223 and £256.

Accordingly, therefore, the data would suggest that the Trust should consider increasing their spending in this area. That said, it is suspected that the joint procurement and collaborative approach to resource planning that schools undertake may be the reason for this low spending and may, instead of being looked at as a high-risk area should be considered an example of good practice. It is recommended however that this area being reviewed to ensure that expenditure is being coded correctly and resourcing is appropriate and not something which is being flagged through the other internal monitoring systems.

The third ranked spending risk area is Teaching and teaching support staff. As mentioned at the top of this report TEFAT has a values led commitment to inclusive education with a high number of pupils listed as having a SEN need or EHCP. Therefore, it is to be expected that spending in educational support staff would be higher than in other schools which don't champion inclusivity.

TEFAT already monitor total staff spending as well as supply costs and PTR as part of the overview dashboard given to each school. The Trust goes further in this analysis in the Finance Workbook and gives a breakdown, over time, of the different types of staff post and the costs being incurred. This data could be enhanced further by benchmarking the different areas of staff costs against green/amber/red threshold values which may help to guide locally led staffing decision making.





On the Finance Workbook, the Trust also has sections for tracking both teacher deployment which provides a deployment percentage figure and TA deployment which doesn't calculate a percentage. An example of this data is shown below.

Foren	Surnar	FTE	Type	T	Service	Rec	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Nur	PPA	EHC	ARF	Smz	Wrt	ECT	Ma	Lea	Rec
		0.6	Teacher	UPPER		0.5																
		1	Teacher	UPPER																		1
		1	Teacher	UPPER				1														
		1	Teacher	MAIN						1												
		1	Teacher	MAIN						1												
		1	Teacher	LEAD																		
		1	Teacher	LEAD																		1
		1	Teacher	MAIN							0.9											0.7
		1	Teacher	UPPER		0.5																
		1	Teacher	MAIN						1												
		1	Teacher	UPPER		0.15						0.75										
		1	Teacher	MAIN					0.9										0.1			
		1	Teacher	MAIN				0.9											0.1			
		1	Teacher	MAIN			0.9												0.1			
		1	Teacher	LEAD																	1	
		1	Teacher	MAIN						0.9									0.1			
		1	Teacher	LEAD							0.5											
		1	Teacher	LEAD																		
		1	Teacher	MAIN					1													
		1	Teacher	UPPER			1															

Fore	Sum	FTE	Service	Recept	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Nurse	PPA	EHCP	ARP	Small	Wrap	Materi	Leaver	Rechal
		0.3	TA						0.3										
		0.78	TA															0.78	
		0.12	AFTER														0.12		
		1	TA																
		0.91	TA	0.81									0.1						
		0.81	TA															0.81	
		0.08	AFTER														0.08		
		0.81	TA						0.81										
		0.86	TA					0.43											
		0.8	TA							0.8									
		0.8	TA		0.4									0.4					
		0.8	TA					0.8											
		0.8	TA																
		0.81	TA	0.81															
		0.8	TA			0.8													
		0.8	TA		0.8														
		0.8	TA		0.8														
		0.78	TA															0.78	
		0.8	TA								0.8								
		0.81	TA																
		0.12	AFTER														0.12		
		0.12	AFTER															0.12	
		0.79	TA										0.79						
		0.78	TA	0.78															
		0.78	TA			0.78													
		0.12	TA														0.12		
		0.8	TA										0.8						
		0.78	TA							0.78									
		0.78	Supply	0.4										0.38					

From reviewing the data on some of the workbooks it seems that some tabs are not fully populated and some are incomplete, but this is in non-critical data areas. That said, it is recommended that the Trust consider introducing a mechanism to assess the completeness of the data set for each school and consider whether this data is a nice to have or a need to have in which case it may be necessary to have a follow-up process to address any gaps with individual schools.

One area though that the data might incorrectly be being calculated is within the teacher deployment tab. Here there is a column with the header PPA. The schools are currently populating this data field using the definition for this category as lessons being spent covering PPA time of other teacher rather than this being a figure for the time each teacher is allocated for their own PPA time. Whilst this metric is helpful to an extent, it does mean that the teacher deployment percentage should not be regarded as the same as the Teacher Contact Ratio. Using the above shown school as an example, the teacher contact ratio data has been reprofiled and is shown in the table below.

FTE	Type	Service Term	Total lessons available	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Nursery	PPA Time	EHCP	ARP	Small groups	Wrap Around	ECT time	Maternity/LTA	Leaver	Recharged	Mgt Time	Individual teacher
1	Teacher	UPPER	20	10								0									10	50%
0.6	Teacher	UPPER	12	9								1									2	75%
1	Teacher	LEAD	20						10												10	50%
1	Teacher	LEAD	20																		20	0%
1	Teacher	UPPER	20			18						2									0	90%
1	Teacher	MAIN	20		16							2					2				0	80%
1	Teacher	MAIN	20					18				2									0	90%
1	Teacher	MAIN	20					18				2									0	90%
1	Teacher	LEAD	20																		20	0%
1	Teacher	UPPER	20		18							2									0	90%
1	Teacher	MAIN	20				18					2									0	90%
1	Teacher	MAIN	20							18		2									0	90%
1	Teacher	MAIN	20				16					2					2				0	80%
1	Teacher	MAIN	20				16					2					2				0	80%
0.3	Teacher	LEAD	6																		6	0%
1	Teacher	MAIN	20						16			2									2	80%
1	Teacher	MAIN	20		16							2					2				0	80%
15.9			318	19	34	34	50	36	26	18	0	23	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	70	

This data set seems to indicate that the teacher deployment percentage from the Finance Workbook which is stated as being 82.5% is comparable to the teacher contact ratio of 68.2%. Due to the high SEN needs or pupils at this stage and 4FTE out of 15.9 teacher FTE as ECT's this percentage should be expected to be lower than the DfE and Union guidance of 76-78%.

It is recommended that TEFAT review the way in which schools are inputting this data and consider adding in an additional PPA column into next year's Finance Workbook, so that one column captures the number of lessons being used for the teachers own PPA time and those lessons which are being used providing PPA cover to other teachers. This would allow the Trust to have a clear picture of the time utilisation of their teachers, who are the most expensive resource for the organisation and ensure that all schools have similar levels of TCR and explore those which are outliers.

In addition to this monitoring TEFAT also already dynamically track FTE values for all staff types as well as data on their leadership teams, their overall size and the types of posts being utilised. As shown in the table below this data is reported on along with the other financial information to the Board.

School	SLT							Leadership	Leadership
	Exec Principal	Principals	Lead of School/ice	Principal/Deputy Head	Assistant Head	Other			
5FE									
Cippenham Primary	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	5	205.0
4FE									
Westwood Primary School	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	4	192.8
3FE									
Billesley Primary School	0	1	0	3	0	3	0	7	97.6
Hillingdon Primary Academy	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	6	112.1
Shireland Hall Primary Academy	0.5	0	0	2.7	0	2.8	0	6	107.6
John Locke Academy	0	1	0	1	0	4	0	6	107.3
Pinkwell Primary School	0	1	0	1.4	0	3	0	5.4	117.6
Nene and Ramoth	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	4	152.0
Ramseys	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	160.7
2FE									
Netherbrook Primary	0	1	0	0	1	3	1	6	77.8
Cavalry Primary School	0	1	0	0	1	2.6	0	4.6	101.1
The Hyde School	0	0.6	0	0	2.6	1	1.6	5.8	79.1
Kings Rise Academy	0	1	0	1	0	2	2	6	75.3
Childs Hill Primary	0.5	0	1	0	1.4	1.3	0	4.2	104.3
Hollywood Primary Academy	0	1	0	0	1	1	0.8	3.8	110.8
Chandos Primary School	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3	135.0
George Betts Primary Academy	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	135.0
Parkfield Primary School	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	134.0
Kings Norton Primary	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	200.0
Millfield Primary	0	1	0	0	0	1.8	0	2.8	138.6
Woods Bank Primary Academy	0	1	0	1.7	0	0	0	2.7	142.6
Highlees Primary School	0.6	0	1	0	0	1	0	2.6	145.4
Rounds Green Primary	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	4	93.5
Claremont Primary	0.5	0	1	0	1	1	0	3.5	76.6
Eyrescroft Primary School	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	130.0
1FE									
Croft Academy	0	1	0	0	0	0.8	1	2.8	84.3
The Shirestone Academy	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	78.2
Elm Road Primary School	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	105.0
Greenside Primary School	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	68.0
Tiverton Primary Academy	0	1	0	1	0	0.8	0	2.8	72.1
Griffin Primary School	0.4	0	1	0	1	0	0	2.4	64.2
<b>Totals/Averages</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>121.4</b>	<b>116.2</b>

Furthermore, the Trust is also tracking teacher totals alongside its pupil teacher ratio (PTR), its pupil adult ratio (PAR) and the aforementioned Teacher Deployment percentage, as shown in the table below. Broadly speaking a PTR outside the 19-25 range and a PAR outside of 8.5-13 would likely be considered as a high risk.

Currently the Trust averages in these two areas are 20.7 and 9.8 which are both slightly lower than optimal. As the number of Form Entry for the schools vary, each of these may have slightly different green threshold ranges and so while looking at this data side-by-side is helpful, they should also be reviewed singularly. Those that fall outside of these ranges have been highlighted in red.

School	Total Teachers incl SLT	Pupils per staff member		Teacher deployment (23-24)
		Pupils per teacher		
5FE				
Cippenham Primary	39.49	26.0	11.5	84.16%
4FE				
Westwood Primary School	37.2	20.7	9.1	82.40%
3FE				
Billesley Primary School	41	16.7	9.5	83.80%
Hillingdon Primary Academy	32.98	20.4	10.7	88.56%
Shireland Hall Primary Academy	31.6	20.4	9.5	89.25%
John Locke Academy	28.7	22.4	12.2	86.06%
Pinkwell Primary School	28.3	22.4	10.7	67.61%
Nene and Ramnoth	26	23.4	8.4	76.84%
Ramseys	25.03	19.3	9.4	95.60%
2FE				
Netherbrook Primary	19.75	23.6	11.1	61.07%
Cavalry Primary School	17	27.4	10.7	87.22%
The Hyde School	20.85	22.0	9.8	96.59%
Kings Rise Academy	23.4	19.3	9.4	75.00%
Childs Hill Primary	21.4	20.5	8.7	94.70%
Hollywood Primary Academy	20.01	21.0	11.4	
Chandos Primary School	22.7	17.8	8.7	86.18%
George Betts Primary Academy	18.8	21.5	9.7	82.52%
Parkfield Primary School	20.1	20.0	9.1	
Kings Norton Primary	19.7	20.3	10.0	83.74%
Millfield Primary	16.8	23.1	11.2	90.28%
Woods Bank Primary Academy	21.5	17.9	8.8	86.30%
Highlees Primary School	18.3	20.7	9.7	81.80%
Rounds Green Primary	18.8	19.9	9.6	83.00%
Claremont Primary	15.97	16.8	7.3	88.90%
Eyrescroft Primary School	11.6	22.4	9.7	86.50%
1FE				
Croft Academy	11.2	21.1	8.2	79.50%
The Shirestone Academy	10.6	22.1	10.4	72.50%
Elm Road Primary School	9.48	22.2	10.7	80.10%
Greenside Primary School	12.8	15.9	9.8	57.60%
Tiverton Primary Academy	9.4	21.5	10.0	74.60%
Griffin Primary School	10.6	14.5	7.9	80.80%
<b>TRUST AVERAGES</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>82.18%</b>

Within the Educational ICT area of spending the Trust is already embarking on a strategy of collective purchasing (spend to save). This will enable both upfront hardware purchasing and ongoing software/other products/services to be purchased at a more competitive price. Equally the Trust is looking to drive costs over time through their new arrangements with Drax and SEFE.

The fact that there are no areas of high or low concern for any of the Trusts schools in their catering expenditure is likely to be evidence that the collective procurement of Dolce is delivering good value. Equally the fact that only half the school's access this offer yet still aren't flagging as a medium or high risk demonstrates that the approach

the Trust takes in offering collective purchasing but not insisting on it, is striking the right balance for their schools and the Trust as a whole.

### **PART 3: Recommendations, Opportunities and Associated Costed Savings**

#### **3.1 Costed Recommendations**

As previously stated, as TEFAT are not in an in-year and cumulative deficit position, creating a list of costed recommendations has not been the main priority of this report. The level of experience and expertise with the Central Trust team is significant and leaders have demonstrated an in-depth understanding of their individual schools and how this plays into the Trust's position overall.

It is the considered opinion of the reviewer that if the Trust were to start forecasting a significant deficit at either an individual school level or Trust wide level that they would take prompt action. The data available, even before any action on the below uncoded recommendations are considered and/or acted upon, demonstrates that they have the mechanisms necessary to fully understand the likely impact of any spending changes both to their pupils and the financial forecast.

The only one area for a costed recommendation is listed below. It is acknowledged that a mis-coding or intentional spending strategy has resulted in this level of expenditure occurring.

3.2. Costed Table			
Achievability	Opportunities	Analysis / Rationale	Estimated Benefit broken down over three years
High	Administrative supplies	Currently 32 out of 33 schools are rated high spending in this area (ranging from £697-£361). If an average reduction of £10 per pupil in Year 1 could be achieved in this area then significant savings could be realised without too much impact on frontline teaching. It is suggested that in Year 2 this increases to £15 per pupil and in Year 3 £20 per pupil.	Yr1 - £131,790 Yr2 - £197,685 Yr3 - £263,580

#### **3.3 Other Findings**

1. Review some of the tabs on the Financial Workbook such as contracts management to ensure full data sets are available.
2. Review the teacher contact ratio details held on the Finance Workbook. These do not define the PPA time as being the individual teachers PPA time but instead this column shows the amount of PPA cover teaching they do. The sheets should be amended in the next round of creation (for the September

- 2025 start) to display this information as the amount of PPA time teachers receive, maybe alongside the current calculation.
3. Include more forecast data on future pupil numbers and consider introducing a new field of the Finance Workbook which would capture actions required by a school to address its falling roll if that were an issue (e.g. Griffin, Claremont and Rounds Green primary schools).
  4. Establish explicit targets for some of the key ICFP areas that the Trust would like to see improved.
  5. Consider whether the development of a national partnership with an agency provider might help to enhance the resilience of the short-term staffing offer open to the school and bring down the overall cost of cover staff.
  6. Assess whether greater accessing of the DfE agency framework might help reduce the cost of cover across the Trust.
  7. Increase the number of roles being advertised on the DfE's Teacher Vacancy Service and establish a way of defining whether any new candidates come via this route.
  8. Consider adding targets for some of the metrics shown on the Finance Workbook. E.g. on the staffing costs data add percentile values to some of the graphs or create a table with the percentile values RAG rated against a green threshold range.
  9. Address the gaps in data on the Finance Workbook and consider initiating conversations with those schools that have not fully completed.
  10. Review Griffin Primary school in more depth as this appears to have a significantly falling roll as well as some staffing metrics which would make it a cause for concern.
  11. Review the organisational decision to not proactively approach schools or smaller Trusts to instigate the conversation about joining TEFAT. TEFAT should regard itself as a strong Trust and one that has much to offer other schools. Equally the DfE should regard TEFAT as a strong partner to have in helping find solutions for schools which may be struggling for financial, educational or other reasons. TEFAT would be a positive option for many and could have a significantly positive impact on other vulnerable children's life outcomes. It is in this context that it is being recommended that TEFAT consider identifying schools that fit its values and delivery model and become more proactive in looking to initiate those conversations.
  12. Review the way in which some of the most impactful ICFP metrics are being presented to and used by ELT and the Board. It may be useful once a decision has been made as to whether to expand the metrics, to then decide as to whether they can be laid out in a way that highlights organisationally the areas of concern.
  13. Consider the extent to which there is the financial scope and organisational appetite to consider funding a new, Trust-wide and centrally funded administrative post to help support individual schools, clusters of schools and the regional structure in identifying external sources of funding and submitting applications to those opportunities.

#### **PART 4: Feedback from School/Trust**

- See Annex 1- management response attached separately.

*This report is intended to provide this school/trust with a range of options which have been discussed during the SRMA's deployment. Ownership and implementation of any recommendations is the school/trusts decision and responsibility. The recommendations have been developed using the data made available to the SRMA, combined with their knowledge skills and experience of school business and ICFP. The range of options have been discussed during the SRMA deployment. It is not an exhaustive list and can only take into account the current organisational context and data available.*