



Cheshire Academies Trust
Inspiring hearts and minds

Statement of Accounting Policies

Next Update: Autumn 2024

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements of Cheshire Academies Trust (CAT) are prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards, the Charity Commission 'Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities' ('SORP 2005'), the Academies Accounts Direction issued by the ESFA and the Companies Act 2006. A summary of the principal accounting policies, which are applied consistently, except where noted, is set out below.

Going Concern

Example statement:

Trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Trust to continue as a going concern. Trustees will make this assessment in respect of a period of one year from the date of approval of the financial statements.

This assessment will be carried out and statement recorded in the Trustees annual report.

Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are recognised when the Trust has entitlement to the funds, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grants receivable

Grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the balance sheet. Where income is received in advance of entitlement of receipt its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

Donations

Donations are recognised on a receivable basis where there is certainty of receipt and the amount can be reliably measured.

Other income

Other income, including the hire of facilities, is recognised in the period it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

Donated Services and gifts in kind

The value of donated services and gifts in kind provided to CAT are recognised at their open market value in the period in which they are receivable as incoming resources, where the benefit to the Trust can be reliably measured. An equivalent amount is included as expenditure under the relevant heading in the Statement of Financial Activities, except where the gift in kind was a fixed asset in which case the amount is included in the appropriate fixed asset category and depreciated over the useful economic life in accordance with CAT policies.

Resources Expended

All expenditure is recognised in the period in which a liability is incurred and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated based on time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Costs of generating funds

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

Charitable activities

These are costs incurred on the Trust's educational operations.

Governance Costs

These include the costs attributable to the CAT's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and Trustee/Local Governing Body meetings and reimbursed expenses. All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Assets are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment based on the following de-Minimis levels. They can be capitalised individually or as a group

1. Land and Buildings	£5,000
2. Vehicles, Plant & Machinery and Other Equipment	£3,000
3. Furniture & Fittings	£500
4. Information Technology Equipment	£250

Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with the aid of specific grants, either from the government or from the private sector, they are included in the Balance Sheet at cost and depreciated over their expected useful economic life. The related grants are credited to a restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities and carried forward in the Balance Sheet.

Depreciation on such assets is charged to the restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities to reduce the fund over the useful economic life of the related asset on a basis consistent with the Academy Trust's depreciation policy.

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

- Long leasehold buildings – 2% (50 years) straight line
- Fixtures, fittings and equipment 20% (5 years) straight line – nil residual value
- Heavy Equipment, PE and kitchen equipment – 20% (5 years) straight line – nil residual value
- ICT equipment 25% (4 years) straight line – nil residual value
- Motor Vehicles 20% (5 years) straight line – nil residual value
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Assets in the course of construction are included at cost. Depreciation on these assets is not charged until they are brought into use.

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

Leased Assets

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

Stock

Unsold uniforms and catering stocks are valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

Taxation

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

Pensions Benefits

The Teachers' Pension Scheme ('TPS') and the Local Government Pension Scheme ('LGPS') provide retirement benefits to employees of CAT. These are defined benefit schemes, are contracted out of the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme ('SERPS'), and the assets are held separately from those of CAT.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the Trust in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The Government Actuary based on quinquennial valuations using a prospective

benefit method determines the contributions. As stated in Note 27, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and CAT is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution scheme and the contributions recognised as they are paid each year.

The LGPS is a funded scheme and the assets are held separately from those of the CAT in separate trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs. Past service costs are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities if the benefits have vested. If the benefits have not vested immediately, the costs are recognised over the period until vesting occurs. The expected return on assets and the interest cost are shown as a net finance amount of other finance costs or credits adjacent to interest. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in other gains and losses.

Fund Accounting

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

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

Restricted general funds comprise all other restricted funds received and include grants from the ESFA.

Conversion to Cheshire Academies Trust

The conversion from state maintained schools to a multi-academy trust involves the transfer of identifiable assets and liabilities and the operation of the schools for consideration and will be accounted for under the acquisition accounting method.

The land and buildings transferred on conversion from maintained schools to Cheshire Academies Trust are valued at their depreciated replacement value being a reasonable estimate of what the schools could have expected to pay for a similar provision. Their depreciated replacement value is in accordance with accounting policies set out by Cheshire Academies Trust. The amounts are recognised under the appropriated balance sheet categories, with a corresponding amount recognised in voluntary income as a gift or as net expenditure in other resources expended from the SOFA and analysed under unrestricted, restricted general and restricted fixed asset funds. This includes Land and Buildings, ICT, furniture and fittings and Vehicles, pension liabilities, school fund monies and the schools budget surplus/deficit.

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