

**Company Registration Number: 11442865 (England & Wales)**

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**Annual report and financial statements**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

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**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**Reference and administrative details**

<b>Members</b>	P Burbidge C Hardy S Knowles A Nursey J Prideaux (resigned 24 November 2020)
<b>Trustees</b>	C Hardy, Chair of Trustees C Cuddington (resigned 16 October 2020) <sup>1</sup> J Edgar <sup>1</sup> I Linney-Drouet (appointed 9 October 2019) <sup>2</sup> A Maitland <sup>1</sup> P Murphy, Acting Chief Executive Officer (from 11 March 2020) D Webb, Executive Headteacher and Chief Executive Officer (deceased 9 March 2020)
	<sup>1</sup> Member of Finance and Audit committee <sup>2</sup> Co-opted Trustee
<b>Company registered number</b>	11442865
<b>Company name</b>	Coppice Primary Partnership
<b>Principal and registered office</b>	Loose Primary School Loose Road Maidstone Kent ME15 9UW
<b>Chief executive officer</b> <b>Acting Chief executive officer</b>	D Webb (deceased 9 March 2020) P Murphy (appointed 11 March 2020)
<b>Senior management team</b>	D Webb, Executive Headteacher / Accounting Officer (deceased 9 March 2020) C Cuddington, Acting Accounting Officer (from 11 March 2020) S Holman, Headteacher at Loose Primary School and Head of School at Coxheath Primary School A Makey, Head of School at Loose Primary School G Mazza, Headteacher at Coxheath Primary School R Powell, Headteacher at St Katherine's School & Nursery (from 1 November 2019) A Lacey, Chief Finance Officer / Trust Business Manager

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**Reference and administrative details (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

**Independent auditor**      Kreston Reeves LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
Statutory Auditor  
Montague Place  
Quayside  
Chatham Maritime  
Chatham  
Kent  
ME4 4QU

**Bankers**                      Lloyds Banking Group  
Commercial Banking  
2nd Floor  
125 Colmore Road  
Birmingham  
B3 3SD

**Solicitors**                    Brachers LLP  
Sommerfield House  
59 London Road  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME16 8JH

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**Trustees' report**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

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The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditor's report of the charitable company for the year 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020. The annual report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a Directors' report under company law.

The Trust operates three academies for pupils aged 4 – 11, in the Maidstone and surrounding area (Kent). It has a pupil capacity of 1,680 and had a roll of 1,586 in the school census on 1st October 2020. In addition, St Katherine's School operates a nursery for 2 – 4 year olds and has 34 pupils on roll.

**Structure, governance and management**

**a. Constitution**

The Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents of the Academy Trust. The Trustees of Coppice Primary Partnership are also the Directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law. The Charitable Company, Coppice Primary Partnership, was established on 2 July 2018 and began operating on 1 September 2018.

The three academies run by Coppice Primary Partnership are:

- Coxheath Primary School (joined 1 September 2018)
- Loose Primary School (joined 1 September 2018)
- St Katherine's School and Nursery (joined 1 November 2019)

Details of the Trustees who served during the year, and to the date these accounts are approved are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 1.

**b. Members' liability**

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

**c. Trustees' indemnities**

Subject to the provisions of the Companies Act 2006, the Academy Trust maintains Trustees and Officers' liability insurance which provides appropriate cover for any legal action brought against the Company. The Trust also granted indemnities to each of its trustees to the extent permitted by law.

Insurance cover is provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Risk Protection Agreement (RPA) which includes for up to £10m trustee's liability.

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**Trustees' report (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

**Structure, governance and management (continued)**

**d. Method of recruitment and appointment or election of Trustees**

The management of the Trust is the responsibility of the Trustees who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the Articles of Association.

The Trust shall have up to nine Trustees as set out in its Articles of Association and Funding Agreement, who shall be appointed:

- Either by the Members
- Co-opted Trustees who are appointed by the Trustee Board
- The Trust Leader who acts as the Chief Executive Officer / Accounting Officer is an ex-officio Trustee
- Other than the Trust Leader (ex-officio), Trustees are appointed for four years and may be re-appointed at the end of their term.

When appointing new Trustees, consideration is given to the skills and experience mix of existing Trustees to ensure the Board has the necessary expertise to contribute fully to the development of the Trust. Posts are advertised if appropriate, and candidates interviewed by the Chair of Trustees and Trust Leader (CEO) and, unless a Co-opted Trustee, a recommendation for appointment is made to Members for confirmation.

Each Academy has a Local Governing Body consisting of 7 Governors. In accordance with the Articles of Association, a minimum of two Parent Governors are elected to each Local Governing Body.

**e. Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees**

The training and induction provided for new Trustees will depend on their existing experience. All Trustees are provided with copies of: the scheme of delegation, policies and procedures, Trust strategic document, financial information including Academies Financial Handbook, Trust Guide to Governance, information for Trustees, Code of Conduct and relevant past minutes.

The Trust has membership with both The National Governance Association (NGA) and Confederation of School Trusts (CST) which provide online training and support for Governors/Trustees. Additional training for Trustees and Governors is given by Kreston Reeves LLP, our financial advisors.

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**Trustees' report (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

**Structure, governance and management (continued)**

**f. Organisational structure**

In accordance with our funding agreement, the Trustees are responsible for ensuring that high standards of governance are maintained. They exercise their powers and functions with a view to fulfilling a strategic leadership role in the running of the Trust and its academies.

The Trust Board establishes an overall framework for the governance of the Trust and determines membership, terms of reference via a scheme of delegation and procedures for Committees and other groups.

It is also responsible for agreeing and keeping under review the policies, plans and procedures within which the Trust operates, although operational plans and policies are delegated to the relevant committee. Trustees monitor the activities of the Committees through the minutes of their meetings.

The Trust Leader is the Academy Trust's Accounting Officer and with the support of the Trust Leadership Team is responsible for the execution of strategic decisions taken by the Board of Trustees, and oversees the work of the Headteachers. The Trust Business Manager is the Chief Finance Officer.

The Local Governing Bodies are responsible for monitoring and challenging school effectiveness in all areas within individual academies and for ensuring high levels of teaching and learning, safeguarding and financial management through monitoring visits.

There is a combined Finance and Audit Committee; the membership of which is appointed by the Trustees. The committee meets four to five times a year. It is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing policy and performance in relation to financial management (setting the budget and monitoring), compliance and regularity, and reviewing the Trust risk register. The Finance and Audit Committee is responsible for establishing the annual audit programme and ensuring reviews are carried out either by the internal audit function or through commissioning external audits as appropriate.

The following decisions are reserved for the Board of Trustees:

- To consider any proposals for changes to the constitution of the Academy Trust and its committee structure,
- Appoint or remove the Trust Leader (Accounting Officer), the Trust Business Manager (Chief Finance Officer) and Clerk to the Trustees,
- Approve returns to the ESFA and Companies House,
- Determine the educational character, mission and ethos of the Trust.

The Trustees have devolved responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Academy Trust to the Trust Leader (Accounting Officer) and the Executive Leadership Team. This team comprises the Trust Leader, Headteachers and the Trust Business Manager (Chief Finance Officer). The Executive Leadership Team implements the policies and delivers the strategic plan approved by the Trustees and report back to the Trust Board via the Trust Leader.

Following the tragic and sudden death of D Webb in March 2020, the Trust, supported by and with the agreement of the DfE and ESFA, have interim leadership and management arrangements which will remain in place until the new Trust Leader takes up their position at Easter 2021. The day to day operation of the Trust is led by C Hardy (Chair of Trustees), P Murphy (Trustee) as CEO for Standards and C Cuddington (Trustee) as Accounting Officer, who are undertaking various operational matters during this period.

C Cuddington has resigned as a Trustee and will continue as Accounting Officer in a contracted capacity through her company, EduFin.

The CEO and Accounting Officer, with the support of the Trust Leadership Team, are responsible for the execution of strategic decisions taken by the Board of Trustees, and oversee the work of the Headteacher's. The Trust Business Manager is the Chief Finance Officer.

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
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**Trustees' report (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

**Structure, governance and management (continued)**

**g. Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel**

The Trust currently applies the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document published annually by the Department for Education, as well as the locally agreed pay policy for the Local Authority in relation to non-teaching staff.

The pay for the Leadership Team is set in accordance with the Group size of the Trust and individual academies.

The Trust has adopted a staff appraisal policy. All staff, including the leadership team, have clear performance objectives which for classroom based staff include pupil progress.

The Trust Board has delegated all pay decisions with the exception of the Executive Leadership team to the Trust Leader and Headteachers. All pay decisions relating to the Executive Leadership Team are recommended by the Trust Leader and are ratified by the Trustees, who are expected to seek the professional advice of others in relation to decisions on the Trust Leader's pay.

**h. Trade union facility time**

**Relevant union officials**

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the year	-
Full-time equivalent employee number	-

**Percentage of time spent on facility time**

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	-
1%-50%	-
51%-99%	-
100%	-

**Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time** £

Total cost of facility time	-
Total pay bill	4,437,224
Percentage of total pay bill spent on facility time	- %

**Paid trade union activities**

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours	- %
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**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
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**Trustees' report (continued)**  
for the year ended 31 August 2020

**Structure, governance and management (continued)**

**i. Related parties and other connected charities and organisations**

There are no related parties which either control or significantly influence the decisions and operations of the Trust. There are Parent Teacher Associations (PTA's) associated with all three academies, who raise funds which are donated to the academies throughout the year.

For the period April – October 2019, the Trust was associated with St Katherine's School and Nursery via a memorandum of understanding in relation to the support being provided to the school pending their conversion to an academy and the school joining the Trust on 1 November 2019. As part of the application to convert, the DfE approved a sponsorship funding application and the Trust received £45,000 to support school improvement for which expenditure was incurred during the 2019/20 academic year.

C Cuddington, Acting Accounting Officer and Trustee of Coppice Primary Partnership (resigned as a Trustee on 16 October 2020), disclosed a pecuniary interest as being a Director of Education Finance Solutions Limited, with whom Coppice Primary Partnership entered into a 3-year agreement, commencing in the 2020/21 financial year, for the hosting of the new financial accounting system at a total cost of £7,250 (£2,750 in year 1 and £2,250 in years 2 and 3). The Trust submitted the information to the ESFA in-line with current regulations.

**j. Engagement with employees (including disabled persons)**

Employees are consulted on issues of concern to them by means of regular staff briefings which are supplemented by a weekly note that is distributed to all staff.

The Trust has implemented and keeps under regular review a number of policies in relation to all aspects of personnel matters including:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Pay and Reward and Appraisal
- Equal Opportunities
- Health and Safety

The Trust has a long-established fair employment practice in relation to recruitment, selection, retention and training. Recruitment is run through the Kent Teach portal and although equal opportunities data is collected this is directed towards Occupational Health to ensure the Trust is made aware of any special requirements or workplace adjustments that newly appointed staff might need.

The 'people' aspect of the Trust is embedded in our Strategic Aims and Plan which includes the opportunity for all staff to receive high quality personal and professional development through the various 'pathways'.

**Objectives and activities**

**a. Objects and aims**

The principal objective of the Academy Trust is to advance, for the public benefit, education in the Mid-Kent area. The Trust establishes, maintains, manages and develops primary schools, offering an innovative and rich curriculum.

We continue to strive to meet the aims and objectives by providing a progressive and exciting global curriculum in a safe and welcoming environment. The Trust's vision and ethos is built on a passionate belief that every child is unique, will experience success and are capable of producing exceptional outcomes. An 'Ethic of Excellence' permeates everything that we do and is central to our vision to retain autonomy and protect the unique identity of each academy within the Trust.

**Trustees' report (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

**Objectives and activities (continued)**

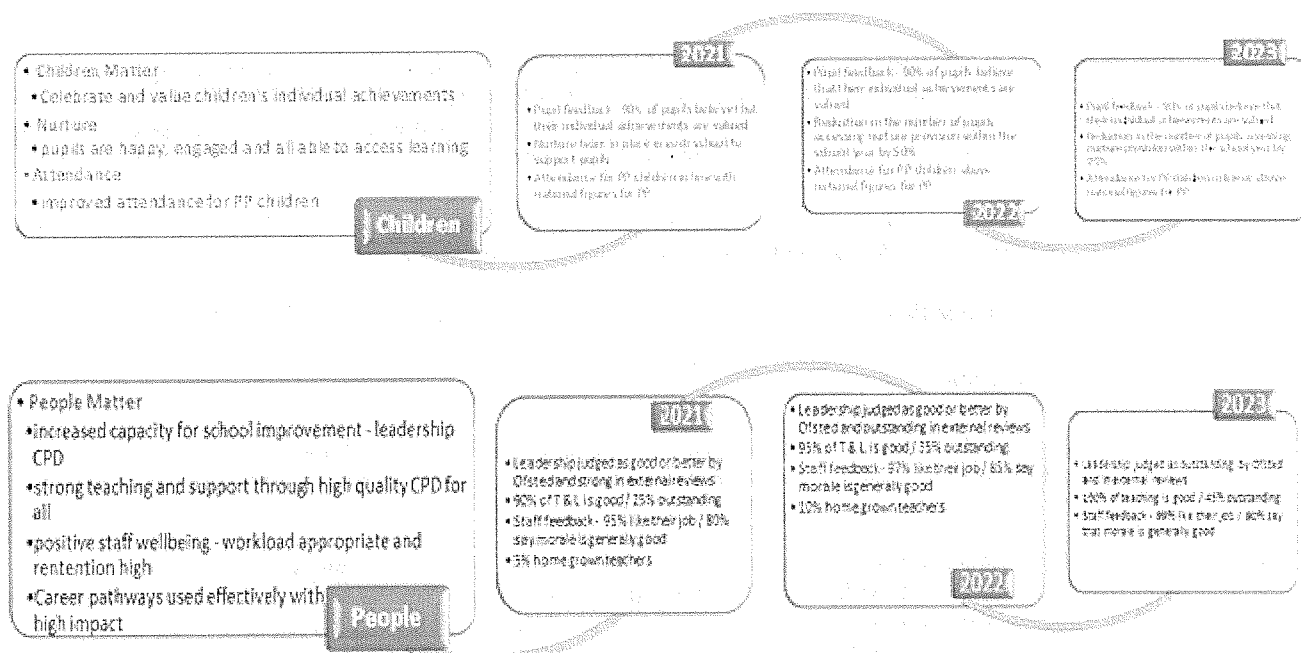
**b. Objectives, strategies and activities**

The strategic aims of the Trust are centred on four key elements: children, people, curriculum innovation, and growth and development.

Strategic Aims	
<b>Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure children are treated as individuals and will experience success, at all levels, enabling them to reach their full potential.</li> </ul>
<b>People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide care and support for the wellbeing of pupils, staff and families resulting in high levels of engagement.</li> <li>To provide professional development opportunities that strengthens the impact of leaders and inspires and motivates all staff to excel.</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To secure an 'ethic of excellence' in which everyone is surrounded by, contributes to, and achieves excellence.</li> <li>To inspire children to excel through the design and implementation of a strong and relevant global curriculum that prepares them well for the next stage in their education.</li> </ul>
<b>Growth &amp; Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To expand the impact that the trust has for securing excellent provision for local children.</li> <li>To increase capacity for highly effective school improvement through managing resources to achieve excellent value for money.</li> </ul>

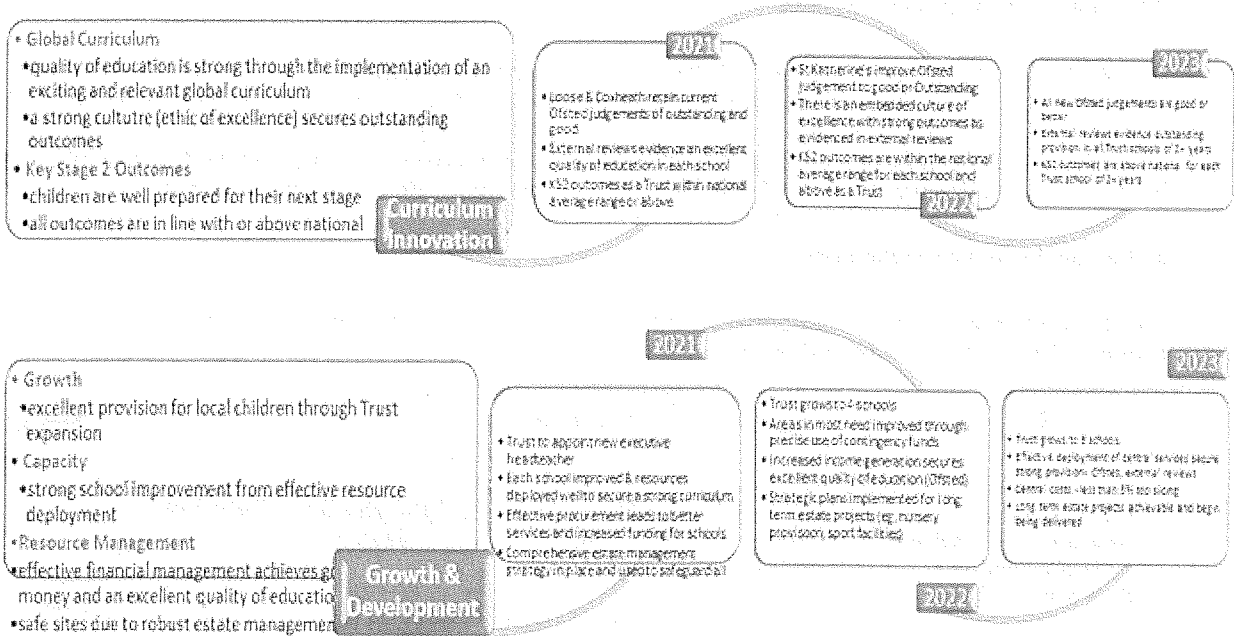
## Strategic Plan

(With annual milestones)



**Trustees' report (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

**Objectives and activities (continued)**



**c. Public benefit**

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commissions general guidance on public benefit in exercising their powers or duties.

They have referred to this guidance when reviewing the Academy Trust's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities.

The Academy Trust aims to advance for the public benefit, education in Mid-Kent and the surrounding area. The Academy Trust follows the KCC admissions criteria.

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
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**Trustees' report (continued)**  
for the year ended 31 August 2020

**Strategic report**

**Achievements and performance**

COVID-19 severely affected school activities not just during the actual period of lockdown from March to June 2020, but also when school's re-opened under tightly controlled operating measures on 1 June 2020.

The adverse impact has not only been in educational performance data but also staff and pupil absence, and financial data particularly the ratio of self-generated income as a percentage of total income.

**a. Key performance indicators**

The Trust approved a set of performance indicators and targets which cover the areas of teaching, staffing and finance. These are summarised below:

KPI	Loose	Coxheath	St Katherine's	Trust	Period
1. Professional Development – All staff to receive not less than 5 days of high quality training per annum with teachers receiving not less than 10 days	Teachers 10 days	Teachers 6 days	Teachers 5 days	Teachers 7 days	Sept 19 – Aug 20
	Support staff 1 day	Support staff 1 day	Support staff 1 day	Support staff 1 day	
2. Teaching & Learning - 90% or greater of teaching staff are judged to good or better	100%	100%	100%	100%	Sept 19 – Aug 20
3. Curriculum – 100% coverage of the trust's global curriculum for all year groups	60%	65-70%	87%	72%	Sept 19 – Aug 20
4. Pupil Achievement – Outcomes are in line with or above national figures at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no scaled scores for the 2019/20 academic year as no pupil testing took place.</li> <li>There will be no further detailed assessments until term 2 2020/21.</li> </ul>				
5. Attendance – Staff and pupils' attendance is above 96%	Staff 96.2%	Staff 95.3%	Staff 97.0%	Staff 96.2%	Sept 19 – Aug 20
	Pupil 96.8%	Pupil 94.9%	Pupil 96.0%	Pupil 95.9%	
6. Staff Retention – Less than 20% turnover in educational based staff during a 12 month period	17.9%	14.6%	6.1%	12.6%	Sept 19 – Aug 20

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
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**Trustees' report (continued)**  
for the year ended 31 August 2020

**Strategic report (continued)**

**Achievements and performance (continued)**

KPI	Loose	Coxheath	St Katherine's	Trust	Period
7. Pupil-to-teacher ratio is no higher than 1.0 above the national average (2019 – 20.5)	1:25	1:22.5	1:21.3	1:23.7	Sept 19 – Aug 20
8. Total Staff costs as percentage of total income is less than 80%	78.6	77.6	77.6	77.9	August monitoring *
9. Trust Reserves are at or above the agreed policy.	Actual £197,600 Target £120,264	Actual £82,807 Target £15,734	Actual £244,763 Target £184,468	Actual £525,170 Target £320,466	August monitoring *
10. Income - Percentage of self-generated income is above 5% of total income	5.5%	4.7%	4.8%	5.1%	August monitoring *

**b. Going concern**

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

Trustees adopted a prudent approach in response to COVID-19 both in regards to expenditure and trading income assumptions, thereby ensuring the 2019/20 out-turn was not adversely affected. The same prudent approach was taken when approving the 2020/21 budget and 3-year plan.

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
(A company limited by guarantee)

**Trustees' report (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

**Strategic report (continued)**

**Financial review**

**a. Results for the period**

Most of the Academy Trust's recurrent income is obtained from the ESFA in the form of grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received from the ESFA during the year ended 31 August 2020 and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities ("SOFA").

Core grant income has been supplemented by capital funding, and some other income such as income from the hire of facilities and other self-generated sources. Total income for the year was £14,693,601, of which £7,264,509 related to the transfers of the leasehold land and buildings, Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) deficit and cash upon conversion to academy status.

Expenditure for the year amounted to £7,623,088, giving net income for the year of £7,070,513, before an actuarial loss of £145,000 on the LGPS, and a gain on the revaluations of the Loose and Coxheath land and buildings of £1,708,780, bringing the overall increase in funds for the year to £8,634,293.

The operating deficit, excluding pension reserve adjustments and transfers upon existing academies joining the Trust, for the year ended 31 August 2020 was £193,996. This includes a depreciation charge for the year of £98,707.

The Academy Trust's level of reserves is £13,055,184 as at 31 August 2020, which includes unrestricted funds of £233,909 and restricted income funds of £319,255. The Trust also has £19,526 of free capital reserves.

Overall, the impact of COVID-19 had a minimal effect on Trust finances as although trading income arising from extended services was significantly less than budgeted the Trust was able to furlough staff employed in these activities.

**b. Reserves policy**

For 2019/20, Trustees had an agreed reserves policy which required the Trust to hold a minimum of 2% of total income plus £24,000 contingency for unforeseen events.

The reserves policy is reviewed annually. In response to the AFH2020, for 2020/21, Trustees agreed that the level of reserves should be increased to 4% of total income, and that in the longer term, the Trust should move towards holding the equivalent of one months' salaries. The annual contingency provision has been kept at £24k resulting in a cumulative sum of £48k being held for unforeseen circumstances.

The Trust maintains a pension reserve fund which represents each school's share of the LGPS fund deficit, calculated in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102. Further details of the calculations and assumptions underlying the balance on this fund are set out in note 29 to the financial statements.

**c. Investment policy**

During year, all funds were held in the current account of the Trust. At any time, these cash balances might have been required to meet short-term requirements especially with the unknown impact of COVID-19 particularly on the loss of income generation from extended services.

This was considered an appropriate use of resources as the Trust was coming to terms with the inclusion of St Katherine's School.

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
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**Trustees' report (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

**d. Principal risks and uncertainties**

The Trust maintains a strategic view of the risks it faces and Trustees receive the Risk Register at its regular meetings.

The main risks that the Trust was exposed to during the year are summarised below. For each of these risks the probability, impact and severity have been considered together with appropriate action and avoidance plans:

- Unable to recruit a new Trust Leader / Accounting Officer – there was a successful recruitment process and the person appointed commences in April 2021.
- Impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning, and also income and expenditure – an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning will be completed in term 2, 2020-21 and plans put in place to address such which will be funded by the additional 'Catch-Up' funding.
- Unable to recruit excellent teachers – staff turnover has been relatively low mainly because of lockdown but where vacancies have arisen the Trust continues to successfully appoint.
- IT Systems and / or hardware become out of date and no longer supported – there are budgeted IT investment plans for the academies and out-dated servers were replaced during August 2020.
- Reduction in grant received from ESFA – future funding includes for increases in grant funding and the minimum funding guarantee.
- Impact of unfunded pay awards and specifically in relation to the matter relating to Term Time Only (TTO) staff and adjustment to holiday entitlement pay – future Government is intended to cover the expected teacher pay awards, and budgets include assumptions for pay increases.

**e. Deficit**

The restricted fund (excluding restricted fixed asset funds) as at 31 August 2020 is in deficit by £2,522,745. This arises from the pension reserve fund which represents the Academy Trust's share of the LGPS fund deficit of £2,842,000, calculated in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 by Barnett Waddingham LLP. Employer contributions are reviewed every three years in consultation with the scheme's administrators.

**Fundraising**

The Trust follows the guidance of the Charity Commission and understands its role in being legally responsible for the charity's fundraising. Its legal duties of acting in the charity's best interests, managing its resources responsibly and acting with reasonable care and skills are at the forefront of its work. The Trust continues to plan, supervise and protect its assets ensuring that a strong governance and management are in place which complies with the law and recognised standards. Trustees review the arrangements to ensure that the Trust remains compliant and thereby protecting its money, assets and reputation.

Each academy within the Trust benefits from a separate self-administered PTA who raise funds for specific academy based requirements. COVID-19 has adversely affected the PTA fundraising activities, particularly in respect of Loose Primary School and St Katherine's School & Nursery – Coxheath Primary School had received the expected PTA donations before lockdown. As a consequence, there was a reduction of 43.4% or £8.9k in the donations received by Loose Primary School and St Katherine's School & Nursery during the year.

In addition, COVID-19 and the associated lockdown from March until June had a significant impact on the income generated by the Academies via their extended services (breakfast club, afterschool club and holiday playscheme). Following the re-opening of schools in June, extended services did not re-open until September 2020. The financial impact was a £116k or 32% reduction in expected trading income, which was partially offset by furloughing staff whose salaries would have been covered by the income.

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
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**Trustees' report (continued)**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2020**

**Plans for future periods**

The Trustees' long term plans for the future are:

- Stabilise the Trust following the tragic death of the Executive Headteacher in March 2020
- The new Trust Leader takes up their appointment on 19 April 2021.
- To increase pupil numbers to ensure all academies within the Trust operate at capacity
- Every child in the Trust attends a strong academy with an innovative and rich curriculum
- To retain high quality teaching staff across the Trust and ensure succession planning
- To secure pupil outcomes in all Trust Academies are in line with or above national expectations

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

The Trust or its Trustees do not act as the Custodian Trustees of any other Charity.

**Disclosure of information to auditor**

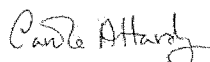
Insofar as the Trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the Charitable Company's auditor is unaware, and
- That Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

**Auditor**

The auditor, Kreston Reeves LLP, has indicated their willingness to continue in office. The designated Trustees will propose a motion reappointing the auditor at a meeting of the Trustees.

The Trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on 9 December 2020 and signed on its behalf by:



**C Hardy**  
Chair of Trustees



**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
**(A company limited by guarantee)**

**Governance Statement**

**Scope of responsibility**

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

As Trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook and competency framework for governance.

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Executive Headteacher, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Coppice Primary Partnership and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

**Governance**

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has formally met 6 times during the year.

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

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
C Hardy, Chair of Trustees	6	6
C Cuddington	6	6
J Edgar	6	6
I Linney-Drouet (appointed 9 October 2019)	6	6
A Maitland	5	6
P Murphy	6	6
D Webb (deceased 9 March 2020)	3	3

I Linney-Drouet an experienced senior educationalist joined the Trust Board in October 2019.

D Webb, Executive Headteacher / Chief Executive Officer who was the Trust Accounting Officer tragically died on 9 March 2020. Since then, and with agreement of the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), P Murphy has carried out the role of Acting Chief Executive Officer and, C Cuddington has been Acting Accounting Officer. Both interim roles will continue until April 2021 when the newly appointed Trust Leader commences.

The sudden death of the Executive Headteacher / CEO in early March 2020, and the soon to follow lockdown and closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be challenging times for the Board, and three Trustees have stepped up to have a more 'hands on role' in managing the school.

Data and information presented to Trustees since March 2020 has concentrated on that relevant to keeping schools open for both vulnerable children and those of key workers, and maintaining a safe environment for both pupils and staff.

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
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**Governance Statement (continued)**

**Governance (continued)**

Governance reviews:

Our planned review was due to take place in Spring 2020. Due to the death of our CEO in March and the COVID situation, interim arrangements (detailed in "Organisational Structure, page 5) have been put in place with DfE and ESFA approval. Following the appointment of the new Trust Leader, who commences the role in April 2021, Trustees will agree the appropriate time for a Governance review, likely to be the end of 2021 or early 2022.

The Finance and Audit Committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose and key tasks during the year were to:

- Ensure the Trustees meet statutory obligations in regards to the financial management of the Trust, and compliance with the Academies Financial Handbook,
- Agreeing the annual audit programme, and commissioning the work via an external provider.
- Evaluated the tender submissions in relation to the catering and cleaning contracts, which were subject of OJEU.
- Review the proposals for a new 'fit for purpose' Trust financial and accounting system which went live on 1 September 2020.

The Finance and Audit Committee formally met four times during the year. Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
C Cuddington (Chair)	4	4
J Edgar	4	4
A Maitland	4	4

**Review of value for money**

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

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

- Restructuring of the Trust central services through the appointment of a Trust Finance Manager to improve financial reporting and, appointment of a Trust Administrator who supports the Executive Leadership thereby releasing them to focus on school improvement, teaching and learning and strategic matters.
- Retendering the catering contract for all three schools which has not only resulted in additional revenue income but a capital investment to refurbishment kitchens and replacement equipment which would have previously been a cost to the schools – effective August 2020.
- Tendering the cleaning contract for all three schools so that the service which was previously a mix of trust employed staff and two separate contractors is now provided by a single contractor – effective August 2020.
- Re-tendered the IT support contract for the three schools to bring the service under a single provider – effective April 2020.

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**Governance Statement (continued)**

**Review of value for money (continued)**

*Impact of COVID-19*

PPN's have not been applied during the academic year despite the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown. The Trust took advantage of the Government furlough scheme and those staff working across the extended services and therefore funded by parental contributions were 'furloughed'. The Trust took the decision that it would make up the difference so that furloughed staff received 100% of their pay.

Whilst there were additional costs incurred such as hygiene and cleaning costs, these were offset by savings as a result of the schools only being open for the children of key workers and the vulnerable.

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

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Coppice Primary Partnership for the year 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

**Capacity to handle risk**

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board of Trustees reviews the Trust risk register at all of its meetings, and also receives an update from Local Governing Body meetings in respect of their regular review of operational risks at the Academies.

The Board of Trustees is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Academy Trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

**The risk and control framework**

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

- Comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees
- Regular reviews by the Finance and Audit Committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance
- Clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties
- Identification and management of risks which are recorded in a Trust risk register which is reviewed by Finance and Audit Committee and Trust Board

The Board of Trustees had originally continued with the arrangement that an appointed trustee, the Chair of Finance would carry out a programme of internal checks. However, due to the special circumstances following the sudden death of the Executive Headteacher, with agreement from the ESFA, the trustee was appointed as acting Accounting Officer. As a consequence, and to avoid conflict of interest, Trustees in accordance with the transitional arrangements provided in the revised FRC Ethical Standards for auditors requested that our appointed auditors, Kreston Reeves to carry out the 2019/20 programme of internal audit checks.

Kreston Reeves carried out an internal audit programme which comprised a review of:

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**Governance Statement (continued)**

**The risk and control framework (continued)**

- Risk management - full assurance with no recommendations.
- Financial controls - substantial assurance with three 'low priority' recommendations.
- Financial planning and monitoring – substantial assurance with one 'medium priority' recommendation regarding the provision of cash flow statements which had been actioned by the time of the audit.

The findings of the audit work were reported to the Finance and Audit Committee at their meeting on 15 July 2020.

The Trustees are satisfied that the internal scrutiny has been fully delivered in line with the agreed schedule of works. No material control issues have been notified to Trustees. All other matters brought to the Board's attention during the year have been followed up appropriately in a timely manner.

As a consequence of the newly revised FRC Ethical Standards for auditors, and with the ongoing arrangement for covering the Trust Leader (Accounting Officer) position, Trustees decided to buy-in an internal audit service from Hacker-Young Chartered Accountants, Thames House, Roman Square, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 4BJ who will carry out the 2020/21 internal audit programme.

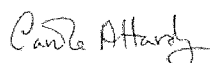
**Review of effectiveness**

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

- The work of the external auditor;
- The work of the internal auditor;
- The financial management and governance self-assessment process or the school resource management self-assessment tool;
- The work of the executive managers within the Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the Finance and Audit committee and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 9 December 2020 and signed on their behalf by:



**C Hardy**  
Chair of Trustees



**C Cuddington**  
Accounting Officer

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**Statement on Regularity, Propriety and Compliance**

As Accounting Officer of Coppice Primary Partnership, I have considered my responsibility to notify the Trust Board and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with ESFA terms and conditions of all funding, under the funding agreement in place between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook 2019.

I confirm that I and the Academy Trust Board of Trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of all funds by the Academy Trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the Academy Trust's funding agreement and the Academies Financial Handbook 2019.

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

*C Cuddington*

**C Cuddington**  
Accounting Officer  
Date: 9 December 2020