



Webinar – Academy Update
Kreston Academies Benchmark Report 2025

Presented by Darren O'Connor & Bekki Foy

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Maximise your potential

Introduction

- Key findings in the Kreston Academies Benchmark Report 2025
- Based on approximately 260 trusts (2,300 schools)
- Based on 31 August 2024 accounts
- Analysed by primary, secondary and MATs
- Useful to compare your trust to averages across regions and nationwide
- Useful starting point (but some caution)

How to interpret the data

- Definitions on page 64
- Data listed on pages 66-70
- Split into:
 - Primary schools (SATs)
 - Secondary schools (SATs)
 - Small MAT (fewer than 3,000 pupils)
 - Medium MAT (3,001 to 7,500 pupils)
 - Large MAT (more than 7,500 pupils)



Benchmark Report – Highlights

- Decline in financial position
- Need to focus on efficiency savings
- Increased GAG/reserve pooling
- Increased centralisation
- Dangers of falling pupil roll



Benchmark Report – Financial Position

- Free reserves declining movement
- Increased in year deficits
- Requirement for better reserves
- Guidance on Academy Trust reserves vs actual performance
- Larger MATS showing better future prospects

Average free reserves movement (£'000)

	2022	2023	2024
Primary SAT	-40	-44	-8
Secondary SAT	103	6	-162
Small MAT	203	9	1
Medium MAT	372	40	30
Large MAT	1,564	267	99



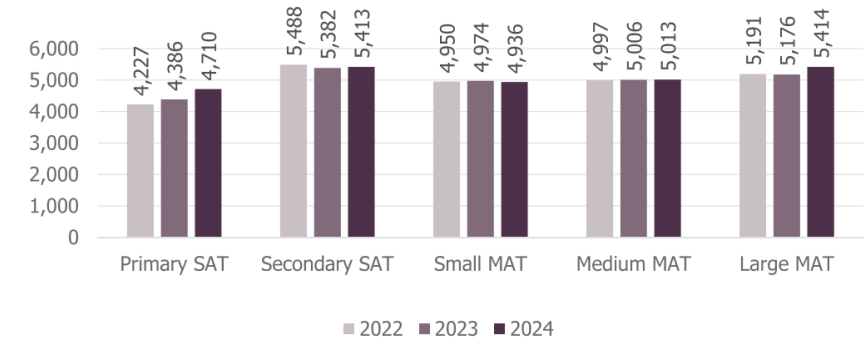
Poll question

Over the next 5 years, do you expect your Trust's reserves to

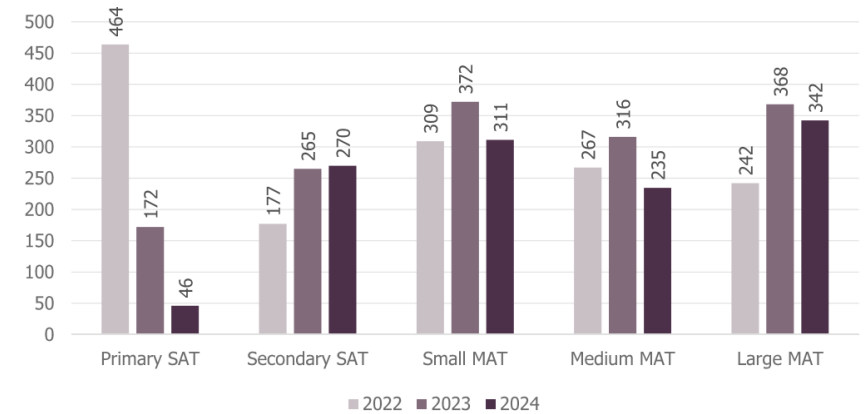
Benchmark Report – Income

- GAG income
- Capital funding
- Investment income
- Future funding consideration

Average General Annual Grant (GAG) income per-pupil (£)

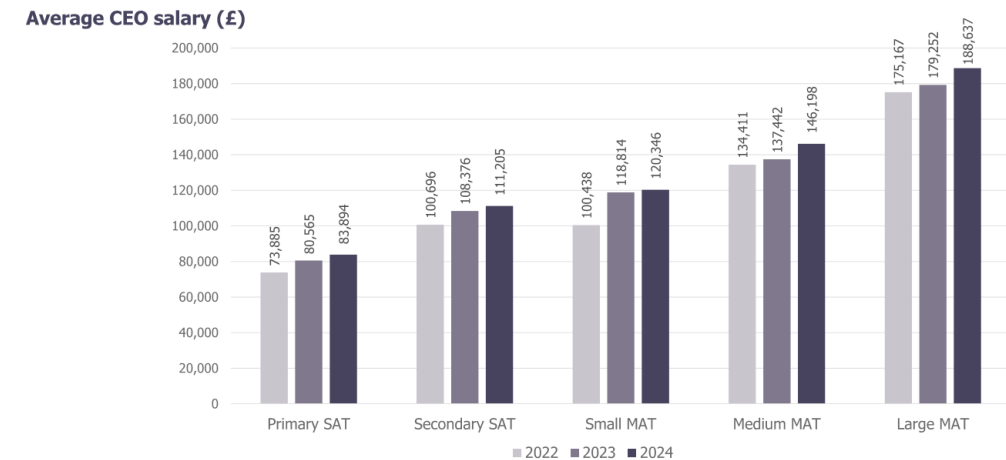
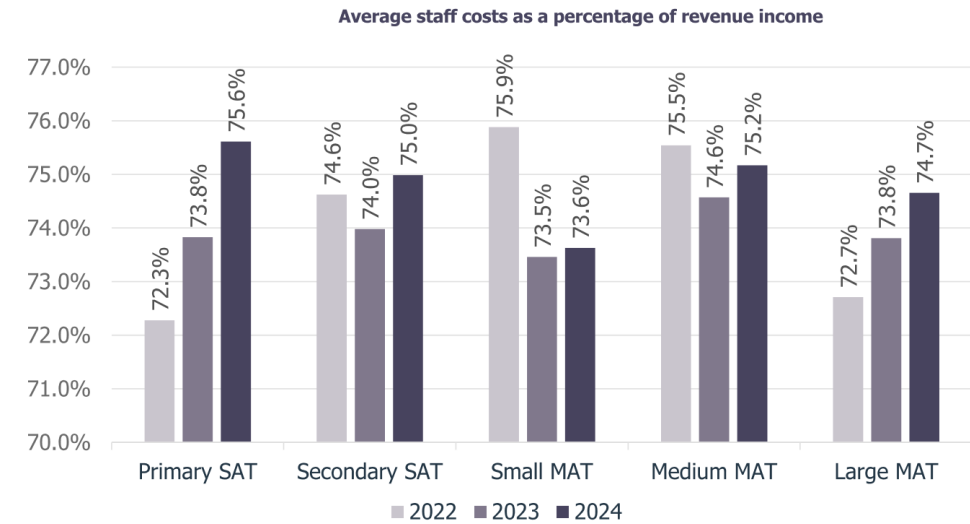


Average capital income per-pupil (£)



Benchmark Report – Staff Costs

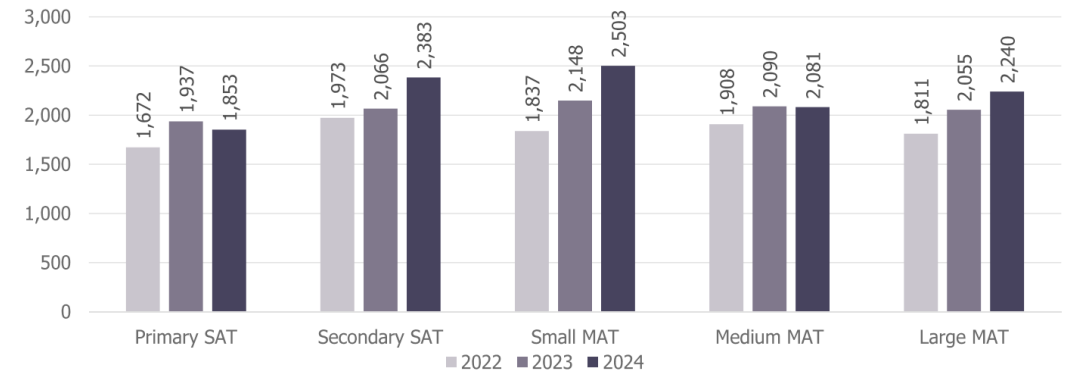
- Staff cost
- Pension
- CEO salaries
- CFO salaries
- Supply, absence and retention



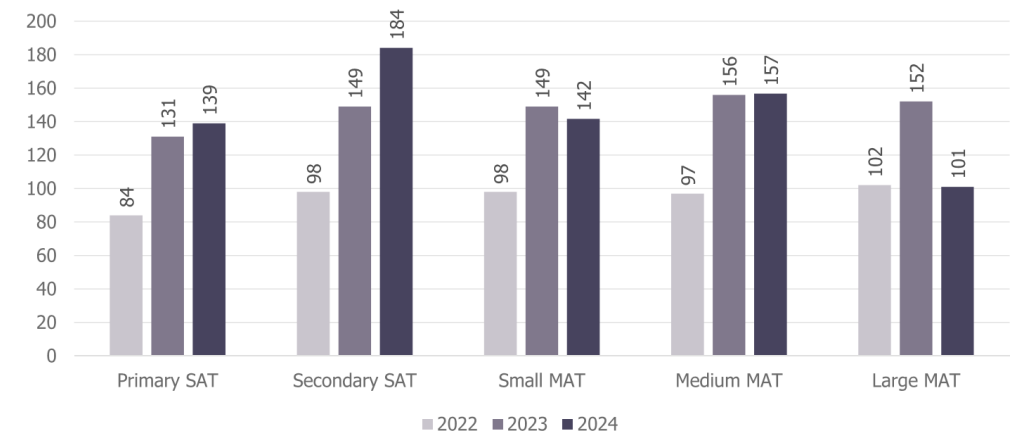
Benchmark Report – Non-Staff Costs

- Slower increase of non staff costs
- Energy costs

Average non staff costs per-pupil (£)



Average heat & light costs per-pupil (£)



Benchmark Report – Balance Sheet

- Reserves
- Cash
- Fixed assets
- Finance leases

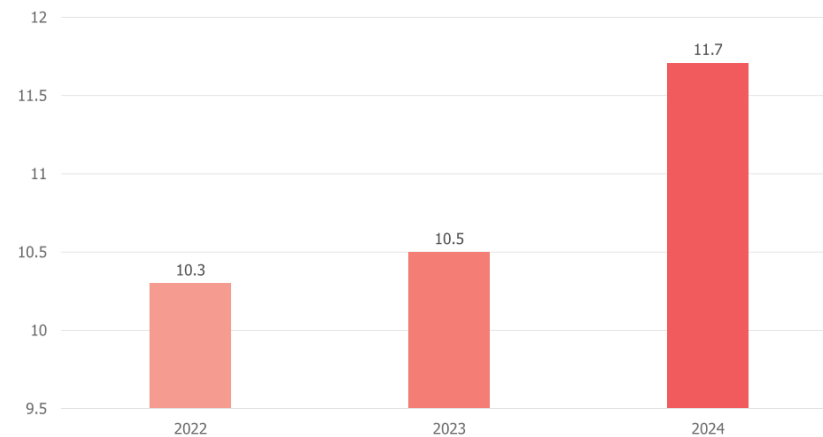
	2022	2023	2024
Primary SAT	1,156	896	967
Secondary SAT	871	801	738
Small MAT	871	842	848
Medium MAT	674	685	564
Large MAT	692	654	627



Benchmark Report – Multi-Academy Trusts

- 1,236 MATs (1,182 in 2023)
- Removal of the conversion support grants

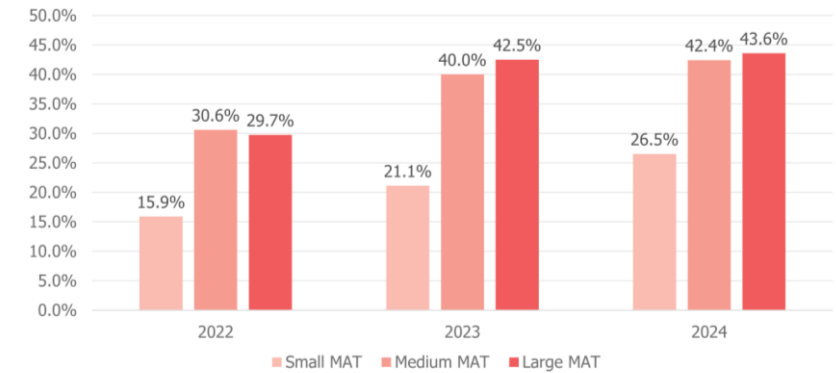
Average number of schools per MAT



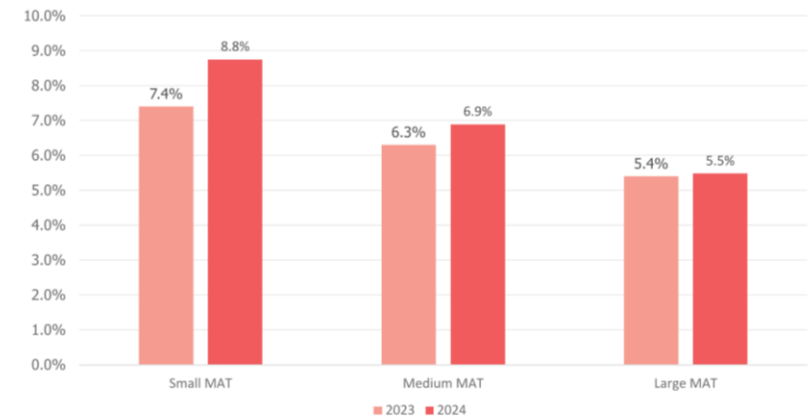
Benchmark Report – Multi-Academy Trusts

- GAG and reserve pooling
- Top slicing
- Centralisation

Percentage of MATs GAG or reserves pooling



Central recharges as a percentage of GAG



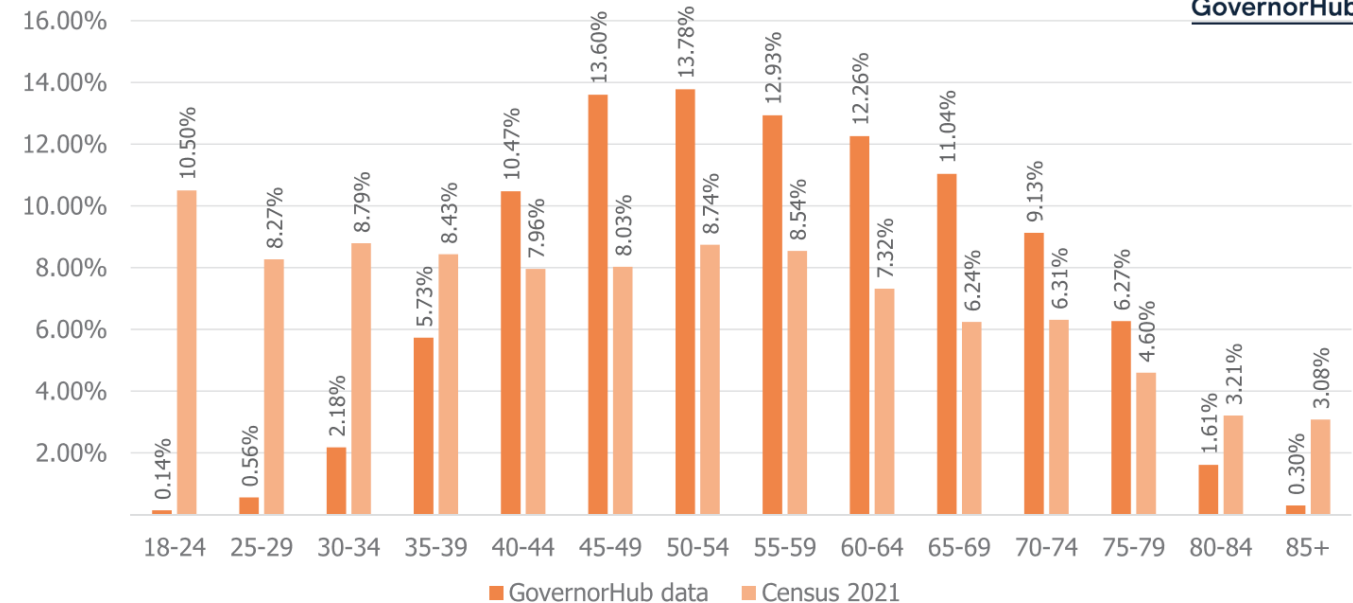
Poll question

Do you expect your Trust to take on new schools within the next 12 months?

Benchmark Report – Governance

- Board demographics
- Diversity on the board
- Recruitment / unfilled vacancies
- Governance professionals
- External reviews

Age: governing board members are typically older (40+ years); younger volunteers (18 to 39 years) are under-represented (GovernorHub base size, 25,571 | Jan 2025)



Benchmark Report – Challenges and Future Trends

- Uncertainty over Labour government plans
- Children's wellbeing and schools bill
- Potential changes to independent school sector
- Recruitment
- Increased staff costs
- Artificial intelligence



Poll question

What is the biggest challenge facing Trusts?

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Useful Links

James Cowper Kreston

www.jamescowperkreston.co.uk/academies

Kreston Academies Benchmarking Report

<https://www.jamescowperkreston.co.uk/news/kreston-uk-academies-benchmark-report-2025/>

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