

LeAF Academy Trust

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Executive Principal:

Dr A C Minard



Value for Money Statement

Academy Trust name: LeAF Academy Trust

Academy Trust company number: 8011930

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of LeAF Academy Trust I am responsible and accountable for ensuring that the academy trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. I am aware of the guide to academy value for money statements, published by the Education Funding Agency, and understand that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

I set out below how I have ensured that the academy trusts use of its resources has provided good value for money during the academic year.

Improving educational results:

The Academy Trust consists of three schools, Oak Academy, Elm Academy and LeAF Studio. The age range is 3 – 19 and the numbers in each school are as follows:

Elm Academy has 298 pupils on role and has an outstanding Ofsted rating, Oak Academy has 877 students on role and has a good Ofsted rating and the Studio has 343 students and has been open for a year in brand new premises.

Student Outcomes:

LeAF Academy makes wide use of data to quantify improvements, monitor finances and track student progress, this table provides a brief summary:

Elm Academy - Year 6 – End of KS2

Subject	Result	Target
Reading L4+	100%	97%
Reading L5+	48%	48%
Writing L4+	100%	93%
Writing L5+	38%	34%
Reading 2 levels progress:	86%	97%
Writing 2 levels of progress:	100%	100%
Maths L4+	100%	100%
Maths L5+	62%	62%
Maths L6	10%	10%
Maths 2 levels of progress:	100%	100%
Reading, Writing and Maths combined L4+	100%	93%
Reading, Writing and Maths combined L5	31%	31%
Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling L4+	100%	93%
Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling L5	86%	34%

Oak Academy

GCSE	2014	2013	2012
5 A* to C (incl En & Ma)	35%	44%	50%
5 A* - C	85%	97%	97%

A Level	2014	2013	2012
A2 Levels A* to E	100%	100%	100%

LeAF Studio

GCSE	2014	2013	2012
5 A* to C (incl En & Ma)	49%	48%	~
5 A*-C	80%	100%	~

A Level	2014	2013	2012
A2 Levels A* to E	100%	100%	~

Our 2014 KS2 SAT results show that Elm Academy is the highest performing school in the borough, with all children achieving expected levels in English and Maths in year 6. Oak Academy and LeAF Studio have significantly lower than average NEETs due to its high quality individual advice and guidance.

Targeted improvement:

The staffing structure has been deployed to drive and support school improvement and our wide curriculum, as outlined in our Development Plans, which focus on key areas within each Academy:

Elm Academy

Priority 1: All pupils make at least expected levels of progress and the expected levels of attainment based on prior attainment.

Priority 2: To continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that 100% of lessons are at least good and at least 35% are outstanding.

Priority 3: To continue to improve attendance so that it is at least in line with national figures. To further reduce PA by at least 0.4% and overall absence by 1.49% to achieve the end of year figure of 96%.

Priority 4: To design and implement a curriculum incorporating the 2014 Primary Curriculum, building on our existing planning and meeting the needs of the children at Elm Academy.

Priority 5: To continue to develop the quality of leadership and management at all levels to drive forward school improvement, securing changes which impact on pupil outcomes.

Oak Academy

Priority 1: Increase progress and outcomes for under attaining students in KS3.

Priority 2: To raise standards at KS4 (OFSTED Action)

Priority 3: Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Ofsted action) particularly in English and Maths.

Priority 4: Raising standards of literacy and numeracy across the academy.

Priority 5: Continue to improve leadership and management at all levels (Ofsted action).

Priority 6: Increase progress and improve outcomes for all students at KS5, in relation to individual targets, VA, AAA and AAB.

LeAF Studio

Priority 1: To establish leadership and management across the Studio.

Priority 2: Outcomes for all students at KS5 to be above with or in line with their individual targets.

Priority 3: All students to make at least three levels of progress at KS4.

Priority 4: To provide an innovative curriculum, which meets the aim of academic excellence, combined with high level employability skills.

The Trust operates in an area of significant deprivation, and each school within the Trust aims to support the learning of all pupils and young people across the ability range.

Sub dividing the Federation of the Schools into smaller working communities, including:

Nursery	3 – 4
Primary School	4 – 11
Transition School	11 – 14
Upper School	14 – 16
Sixth Form	16 – 19
Studio	14 – 19

Each small school provides extensive intervention, targeted through a progress cycle of tracking and assessment.

Extra-curricular provision is a focus across the federation, including Sport, Drama, Duke of Edinburgh, Fishing, Music, Art and Dance.

The trust managed the differing needs of pupils, such as those requiring one to one support, and those requiring more stretch through:

- Year 7 intervention in English and Maths;
- Collaboration work across the borough and wider community; sharing and mentoring of staff across academies within the trust;
- Shared facilities and expertise;
- Holiday Programmes within the local community;
- Peer mentoring programme;
- Equipment and additional resources for individual students;
- Educational visits;
- Extensive extra-curricular provision.

Student Premium

School vision

The targeted and strategic use of student premium supported us in achieving our vision.

Principles

- We ensured that teaching and learning opportunities met the needs of all of the students;
- We ensured that appropriate provision is made for students who belong to vulnerable groups, this included ensuring that the needs of socially disadvantaged students are adequately assessed and addressed;
- In making provision for socially disadvantaged students, we recognised that not all students who receive free school meals will be socially disadvantaged;
- We also recognised that not all students who are socially disadvantaged are registered or qualify for free school meals. We reserved the right to allocate the Pupil Premium funding to support any student or groups of students the schools had legitimately identified as being in need of intervention and support;

- Pupil premium funding was allocated following a needs analysis which identified priority classes, groups or individuals.

Provision

- The range of provision the Governors considered making for this group included:
 - reducing class sizes thus improving opportunities for effective AfL and accelerating progress;
 - providing small group work with an experienced teacher focused on overcoming gaps in learning;
 - 1:1 support;
 - additional teaching and learning opportunities provided through Intervention groups for specific needs.
- All our work through the pupil premium was aimed at accelerating progress and moving children to at least age related expectations. Initially this was in communication, English and maths.

Reporting

- It was the responsibility of the Executive Principal, or a delegated member of staff, to report to the Governors on:
 - the progress made towards narrowing the gap, for socially disadvantaged students;
 - an outline of the provision that was made since the last meeting;
 - an evaluation of the cost effectiveness, in terms of the progress made by the students receiving a particular provision.
- Parents received information as to the progress of students through personal information sent home, on individual education plans, through the six weekly progress summary, and through reporting of assessment results at the end of the academic year.

Changes the Trust has made to its budget to accommodate additional activities

Sharing of a Principal Finance Officer and Payroll and Pensions Officer across the Trust has brought economies of scale, whilst accessing specialist expertise. There is also the sharing of teaching staff and good practice across the schools, ensuring a balance in curriculum provision.

Attendance

Attendance in all three schools is in line with national average.

Absence as percentage of available sessions (from the Summer Census)

Academy	2014	2013	2012
Elm Academy	Aged 5+ 5.05 Aged 4+ 7.01	Aged 5+ 4.97 Aged 4+ 7.07	5.32
Oak Academy	6.31	6.49	7.1
LeAF Studio	5.24	6.00	~

Financial governance and oversight

As accounting officer I have 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 Jane Potter as Responsible Officer and the work of the external Auditor, Carter & Coley Chartered Accountants & Business Advisors;
- the work of the senior leaders within the academy trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

The Finance Staff and the Finance Committee have informed me of the results of their reviews of the system of internal control, aided by accountancy services from Carter & Coley and our Audit Committee.

The academy trust's system of internal financial control was based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures. In particular, it includes:

- budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports;
- termly reviews by the finance committee of reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts;
- monthly financial and management reports covering all departmental expenditure, and revenue budgets;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance.

Better purchasing

All contracts were appraised or renegotiated in a timely manner to get the best mix of quality and effectiveness. Three year contracts have been entered into after tender to ensure reduced costs where it was felt that this would benefit the Trust. As a Multi Academy Trust this has enabled stronger buying power, driving down prices and economies of scale. We have reviewed Service Level Agreements, assessing value for money and duplication in service provisions. This has resulted in the streamlining of service provision and the termination of some services with external providers. There had been a keen need to build a strong in-house team, thereby reducing dependency, where practical, on external providers.

Benchmarking

The Academy has benchmarked costs against similar academies locally and nationally via use of Finance and HR forums.

Options appraisal

The Directors and Senior Leadership Team have applied the principles of best value when making decisions about:

- allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the Multi-Academy Trust;
- targeting of resources to best improve standards and the quality of provision;
- use of resources to best support the various educational needs of all students.

The trust has developed procedures for assessing need, and obtaining goods and services which provide "best value" in terms of suitability, efficiency, time, and cost. Measures in place include:

- competitive tendering procedures;
- procedures for accepting "best value" quotes, which are not necessarily the cheapest (e.g. suitability for purpose and quality of workmanship);
- procedures which minimise office time by the purchase of goods or services from known, reliable suppliers (e.g. stationery, small equipment).

Economies of scale

The Trust has regularly taken opportunities to work collaboratively with others to reduce and share administration and procurement costs. We have:

- taken advantage of a deals and obtained the cheapest rates for gas and electricity on the market;
- negotiated better deals for educational subscriptions, support staff advertising costs etc. due to buying power within the Multi Academy Trust;
- shared procurement best practice using the FD Forum on-line.

Income generation

Opportunities have been taken to explore and generate additional and reliable revenue streams, such as letting out sports facilities, and providing training for graduate teachers. The local community has benefitted from access to a wide range of facilities across the Federation.

Reviewing controls and managing risks

The Trust has formed an Audit Committee who has oversight of reviewing internal controls and managing risks. The Board of Directors approves the Audit Committee's annual programme of work. At the end of each year, the Audit Committee prepares a report of its findings and presents to the Board. Carter & Coley have been appointed as external auditors in addition to Responsible Officer checks. They carried out termly reviews and made recommendations for improvements and any remedial action. Carter & Coley have also provided financial advice and guidance as part of this service.

Budget holders, management and Directors received regular budget reports which were scrutinised to ensure the most effective use of resources to meet the objectives of the Academy. Insurance levels have been reviewed and used cost-effectively to manage risks.

The Directors have determined that an appropriate level of free reserves should be maintained. The reason for this is to provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipt of grants and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies such as urgent maintenance, to plan for future capital projects and to make provisions for fluctuations in student numbers.

To appraise and learn from its strategies and decisions in order to make the budget go further the Trust will:

- Use data to target resources;
- monitor finances carefully;
- increase its use of specialist services, such as provision of a detailed condition report on buildings to inform medium term capital spend and aid grant applications.

Signed: *A. Minard*

Name: **Dr Annetta Minard**
Executive Principal and Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: *18/12/2014*