

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust: Leigh Academies Trust

Company number: 02336587

Year ended: 31st August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Leigh Academies 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 trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during the academic year:

- Examination results continued to show improvement across all three secondary academies in 2014 with performance in Math and English being above national averages despite the much lower starting points of our students. Our Primary and Junior Schools continue to make excellent progress and are full to capacity. This represents an improved return for the DFE grant.
- During the year as a result of changes in government funding and the subsequent reduction in income, the Trust has had to carry out several reviews of staffing levels and services. These have lead, in some cases, to restructuring or in-housing of functions to achieve better value for money, and at some academies we have had to change the structure of the school day and curriculum in order to deliver a value for money education.
- Leigh Academies Trust operates a Central Shared Services model to provide Financial, Human Resource and Estates Management plus ICT Educational Welfare and Inclusive services across the Trust. This delivers consistency, tight financial control and better economies of scale.
- During the year work continued on the new building for The Leigh UTC to ensure that the UTC was ready to open its doors for the first intake in September 2014. The UTC specialises in Computer Sciences and Engineering from Year 10 pupils through to Year 13. The smart new business

look and feel of the UTC represents a significant improvement and provides a modern and inspiring location in which to improve students' educational outcomes. The project came in on budget and the quality and finishes of the building represent very good value for money.

- The structure and governance arrangements of the Trust ensure that the Chair of Governors, Accounting Officer (CEO), Principal Finance Officer (Finance Director), the Trust Executive and the various Principals have control over major spending decisions such as major capital projects and staff recruitment. Monthly management accounts are reviewed by the CEO, the Finance Director, the Trust Executive and the relevant Academy Principals. These are then shared with the Academy Boards, The Trust's Resource Committee and the main Trust Board meet three times a year.
- Over the period, all academies operated within agreed budgets. The Principal Finance Officer and the Finance Team continued to monitor and re-forecast throughout the academic year in order to ensure compliance with DFE and EFA regulations and to ensure decisions were made in accordance with VfM criteria.
- Major procurements involve comparison of tenders from a range of bidders to ensure best value. Benchmarking between academies and with external figures has taken place. Management of conflicts of interest is a high priority.
- All Trust reserves are invested in the HSBC bank with interest rates benchmarked against similar organisations
- In the coming year Leigh Academies Trust will continue to look for further operational efficiencies within the existing academies and establishments. The overriding aim is to deliver value for money in all decisions to ensure that the Trust continues to improve the educational experience and outcomes of students.
- For the past 18 months the Trust has been working with The Stationers' Company to locate and identify a school within the Greenwich area that they could sponsor and assist in the development of a digital curriculum. A school that met these requirements in South East London was identified as Crown Woods College in Eltham. In conjunction with all relevant parties discussions were entered into with a view to Crown Woods College joining the Trust in September 2014. Work progressed throughout the year involving the EFA, Trust Governors and Senior Executives at both the Trust and Crown Woods College. In July 2014 the process was completed and on 1st September 2014 Crown Woods College joined the trust under their new name, Stationers' Crown Woods Academy.

- During the next academic year the Trust hopes to expand to create three clusters over time as other schools and academies decide to join the Trust. The Trust will continue to expand and roll out the Central Shared Services model to enable the academies to deliver greater economies of scale to enable excellent value for money

Signed: 

Name: SIMON BEAMISH.
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 19/12/14