



AUDIT MANAGEMENT LETTER

Year ending 31 August 2024

BEEVER
AND
STRUTHERS

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INTRODUCTION

Our audit of the financial statements of West Hill School (the Academy)is complete. The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention the findings from our audit to date. We appreciate that you may already be aware of the majority of the matters contained in this letter.

In order to comply with the provisions of the International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 260 – ‘Communication of Audit Matters with those Charged with Governance’ by which we report to management on the findings of our audit, with particular reference to:-

- views about the qualitative aspects of the Academy Trust’s accounting practices and financial reporting;
- the letters of representation;
- unadjusted misstatements;
- matters specifically required by other Auditing Standards to be communicated to those charged with governance (such as fraud and error);
- expected modifications to the auditor’s report;
- material weaknesses in the accounting and internal control systems; and
- any other relevant and material matters relating to the audit.

We confirm our professional integrity, objectivity and independence.

We see effective communication as being a key part of our audit, and it is important that there is effective two way communication. We welcome any feedback or questions regarding the conduct of the audit process.

This report is not intended to cover every matter which came to our attention during the audit. We do not accept any responsibility for any reliance placed on it by third parties. Our procedures are designed to support our audit opinion and cannot be relied upon to identify any weakness in systems or controls which may exist.

We would like to take this opportunity to formally record our appreciation for the assistance and co-operation provided to us by the Finance Team who assisted us during the course of our audit.

Beever and Struthers

Date 13 December 2024

KEY AUDIT ISSUES

The following table summarises the key audit issues we identified as requiring specific consideration and the audit procedures we undertook in relation to them.

Audit issues	Audit procedures
<p>Integrity of non-financial information</p> <p>A number of disclosures included in the financial statements are not derived directly from the Academy Trust's financial reporting system e.g. operating lease commitments, related party transactions and completeness of contingent liabilities and provisions</p>	<p>Our audit work in this area included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review of Board and Committee meeting minutes • a review of declaration of interest forms. • discussed any related parties, capital commitments or operating leases with the Business Manager • applied a general consideration throughout the audit process of items that may require disclosure in the financial statements. <p>All related party transactions, regardless of size, must be disclosed in the financial statements. Declaration of Interest forms for all Key Management Personnel, and associated controls were reviewed, and Director/Trustee Searches at Companies House and the Charity Commission undertaken. These were used to inform our assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the related party disclosures in the financial statements.</p> <p>There were no related party transactions to disclose.</p> <p>Based on discussions with the Business Manager and a review of the board and committee minutes there were capital commitments relating to the CIF work, this has been disclosed in the financial statements.</p> <p>Our work in this area was concluded satisfactorily.</p>
<p>Fund Accounting</p> <p>Academy Trusts as Charities are required to classify balances in the financial statements to a fund – i.e. restricted, unrestricted and restricted fixed asset funds. The audit risk in respect of fund accounting is that items are incorrectly allocated to restricted and unrestricted funds.</p>	<p>Our testing of income was supplemented to include an assessment, with reference to source documentation, of the fund classification of the income stream as presented in the financial statements, based on allocations provided by the management team.</p> <p>Similarly, the testing on expenditure considered whether amounts spent from restricted funds represent allowable expenditure under the terms of the restricted income stream that they are attached to.</p> <p>Our work in this area was concluded satisfactorily.</p>

KEY AUDIT ISSUES

Audit issues	Audit procedures
<p>Wages and salaries Payroll is the largest single expense at the Academy Trust and therefore is a significant area in the audit.</p> <p>The audit risks concerning payroll are that leavers in the year have not been correctly removed from the payroll or that fraudulent starters have been added to the payroll and paid a salary. The valuation of the payroll expense as declared in the accounts is also a risk given increasing pressures on budgets in the sector.</p>	<p>We documented the procedures in place for making amendments to the payroll each month to ascertain the level of controls over this process.</p> <p>Amendments to the payroll were reviewed to confirm the procedures are in place.</p> <p>The procedures in place for the addition and removal of starters and leavers to the payroll were documented and tests conducted to ensure the procedures are working effectively.</p> <p>Reconciliations between the accounting system and payroll reports were reviewed, and the disclosures for key management personnel salary costs were corroborated to underlying payroll records.</p> <p>Our work in this area was concluded satisfactorily.</p>
<p>Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)</p> <p>The Academy Trust is in a local government pension scheme which requires disclosure in the financial statements.</p> <p>The risk is that the disclosures made are not in line with the actuary report or that the report contains errors.</p>	<p>The actuary details have been confirmed and their qualifications, experience and reputation reviewed.</p> <p>The actuarial documentation for the year was reviewed to verify the values in the accounts disclosures and assess the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions, source data and methods used in the reports through discussions with the Business Manager.</p> <p>Our work in this area is still ongoing.</p>

KEY AUDIT ISSUES

Audit issues	Audit procedures
<p>Regularity</p> <p>The financial statements include an Independent Reporting Accountants' Report on Regularity. The report provides a limited assurance conclusion about whether the expenditure disbursed, and income received by the Academy in the financial period have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.</p>	<p>We documented the key financial systems and control procedures in place. We will review their effectiveness and undertake tests of control.</p> <p>We undertook testing as set out in the Academies Accounts Direction (AAD), which covers the following broad areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of the Accounting Officer's Statement on Regularity, Propriety and Compliance.• Delegated authorities have been complied with.• Transactions with connected parties are compliant with the terms of the Academy Trust Handbook.• Governance considerations.• Internal controls effectiveness and appropriateness.• Procurement procedures have been applied in line with the Academy Trust's documented procedures.• Grant income has been applied in line with any restrictions outlined in the terms and conditions applicable to the funding. <p>Our work in this area was concluded satisfactorily.</p>

KEY AUDIT ISSUES

Audit issues	Audit procedures
<p>Assessment of fraud risk</p> <p>ISA 240 “The Auditor’s responsibility to consider fraud” requires us to consider the risk of fraud and the impact that this has on our audit approach. There is a presumed significant risk of fraud in two areas; revenue recognition and management override.</p> <p>Revenue Recognition</p> <p>Material misstatements due to fraudulent reporting often result from an overstatement of revenues, for example through premature revenue recognition or recording fictitious revenues. The auditor therefore presumes that there are risks of fraud in revenue recognition and considers which types of revenue may give rise to fraud risks.</p> <p>The Academy Trust’s main source of income is General Annual Grant (GAG) received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The ESFA notify the Academy Trust of the GAG allocation in advance of each financial year. Claw backs are calculated based on in-year census data. We have assessed the risk of fraud in the recognition of GAG as low.</p> <p>The cut off procedures for the GAG funding, along with other material income streams, will be reviewed as part of our final audit visit.</p> <p>Management Override</p> <p>Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk of management override of the system of internal controls.</p> <p>Material misstatements can arise from management overriding the controls which are in place or by manipulating the results to achieve targets and the expectations of the stakeholders.</p> <p>Policy Statement</p> <p>The Trustees have adopted anti-fraud policies, and Trustees review the fraud register regularly.</p>	<p>Our audit is designed to provide reasonable assurance that the accounts are free from material misstatement whether caused by fraud or error. In particular, we reviewed revenue recognition and management control override, as noted below.</p> <p>As part of the audit planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We met management to discuss fraud related risks and the risk of material misstatement in the financial statements. • We reviewed the Academy Trust’s anti-fraud policies. • We also reviewed the work of internal audit. • Reviewed the fraud register. <p>At the audit visits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We assessed and tested the controls over GAG income and other material sources of income, for example capital grants; • Assessed and tested the controls over cash and the segregation of duties in place; • Assessed the controls over the raising and approval of manual journals and accounting estimates. • Tested the cut off on the GAG funding and other material sources of income e.g. local authority grants; • Utilised data analytics to review journal and transactions throughout the year, • Considered the manipulation of the financial results through the use of journals and management estimates, such as provisions and accruals. <p>Our audit did not highlight any material errors in revenue recognition.</p> <p>Our work on systems and controls did not identify any instances of management override of controls. The policy statements in place were found to be updated recently.</p> <p>Our work in this area was concluded satisfactorily.</p>

INDEPENDENCE

Ethics and Independence

Non-Audit Services

In addition to our work as the Academy Trust's external auditors, we also provide other services to the Academy Trust, including:

- Statutory Accounts preparation.
- Regulatory assurance.
- Preparation of Academies Accounts Return.
- Review of Teachers' Pension EOYC.

The statutory accounts, audit and Academies Accounts Return will be independently reviewed by a partner or manager not directly involved in the audit of the Academy. The regularity assurance is linked to the audit assignment. In addition the Academies Accounts Direction requires the external auditor to undertake this assignment. The fee charged for the Teacher's Pension audit is less than 10% of the statutory audit fee.

We consider that appropriate safeguards are in place and, in our opinion, the provision of these additional services does not prejudice our independence and objectivity as the Academy's external auditors.

The fees charged for the Teacher's Pension EOYC review are less than 10% of the statutory audit fee.

We consider that appropriate safeguards are in place and, in our opinion, the provision of these additional services does not prejudice our independence and objectivity as the Academy Trust's external auditors.

Independence Declaration

We confirm that:

- We are not aware of any personal relationships between Beever and Struthers and the Academy.
- Appropriate safeguards have been established for the provision of any non-audit services.
- We comply with Ethical Standards and in our opinion the firm is independent within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements and the objectivity of the engagement partner and the audit staff is not impaired.

QUALITATIVE ASPECTS OF ACCOUNTING PRACTICES & FINANCIAL REPORTING

Accounting Policies

FRS 102 requires that entities should review their accounting policies regularly to ensure that they are appropriate to its particular circumstances for the purposes of giving a true and fair view. The Board of Trustees plays a key role in this process.

We have reviewed the Academy Trust's accounting policies as stated in the financial statements in detail and confirm that we judge them to be appropriate to provide relevant, reliable, comparable and understandable information.

Accounting Estimates

Key accounting estimates in the financial statements concern depreciation, allocation of expenditure and the valuation of the LGPS. We confirm that estimates have been made appropriately in line with our knowledge of the Academy Trust and the sector, and are disclosed satisfactorily in the financial statements.

Timing of Transactions

Our audit work confirmed that material transactions were recorded in the correct accounting periods. Accruals and prepayments were made for material items.

Going Concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. We have reviewed management's assessments. We reviewed the disclosures in the financial statements and conclude these are consistent and representative of the Trust's position and future plans as detailed in the assessments provided. The situation is continually changing and as such we will review further forecasts and financial performance through to the date of signing the accounts.

Report of the Board of Trustees

We reviewed other information in the document containing the financial statements. We confirmed that there is no material inconsistency between it and the financial statements. Further, we are required to confirm that the information in the Trustees' Report etc. is not materially misstated.

Financial Statement Disclosures

We confirm that we judge the disclosures throughout the financial statements to be neutral, consistent and provide sufficient clarity to the user.

Significant Matters Arising from the Audit

There were no significant matters arising from the audit that were discussed, or subject to correspondence with management.

Significant Difficulties Encountered During the Audit

There were no significant difficulties encountered during the audit.

MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER AND AUDIT OPINION

Independent Auditor's Report on the Statutory Financial Statements

In accordance with ISA 580, we obtain written representation from management that they acknowledge their responsibility for preparing the accounts and have made all information available to us.

We will present our management representation letter for signing at the same time as the financial statements. There are no specific matters on which we have requested Board representation to support the conclusions and evidence provided for our audit opinion.

We provided an unmodified statutory audit opinion for the year ended 31 August 2024.

Independent Reporting Accountant's Report on Regularity

We presented our management representation letter for signing at the same time as the financial statements.

There are no specific matters on which we have requested Board representation to support the conclusions and evidence provided for our audit opinion.

We provided an unmodified opinion on our Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance.

AUDIT ADJUSTMENTS

Our audit work is based upon an assessment of materiality to ensure there is no material misstatement contained in the financial statements. In assessing materiality, we take into account both the materiality of the class to which the balance belongs and the overall impact of the balance on the income and expenditure account and balance sheet.

ISA 260 requires us to report to management on all uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit, and to include in this report how we have calculated materiality, and any misstatements identified during the audit which have been corrected. We are not required to report on corrected or uncorrected misstatements we believe are clearly trivial.

Materiality

Our assessment of materiality was based on the first draft accounts received at the start of the audit and calculated using a benchmark at 2% of expenditure. There was no significant adjustments identified during the audit which impacted our initial assessment of the benchmark.

A summary of the final assessment of materiality is as follows:

	Materiality £	Triviality £
West Hill School	125,940	6,297

Adjusted and Unadjusted potential differences

Detail	£'000
Surplus per Trial balance presented for audit	222
Adjustments resulting from the accounts preparation work	
Depreciation charge for the year	(314)
Reversal of accrued income from Cap Grant	(75)
Net adj between various cost and income codes	(35)
Pension costs	(67)
Adjustments from the audit work:	
Additions capitalised	17
Other audit fee	(2)
Audit Fee	(12)
Deficit per audited Accounts	(266)

ACCOUNTING AND INTERNAL CONTROL

We have tested the systems of internal financial control to the extent that we intended to place reliance on them in forming our audit opinion on the accuracy of the figures in the financial statements. Our audit work enabled us to place substantial reliance on the operation of key controls, as planned.

ISA 260 requires that we report to those charged with governance any material weaknesses in internal control that we identify in the course of our audit work. A material weakness is one that could adversely affect the Academy Trust's ability to record, process, summarise, and report financial or other data so as to result in a material misstatement in the financial statements.

Internal Audit

As the external auditors of the Academy Trust we have the sole responsibility for the audit opinion expressed on the Academy Trust's financial statements. We are also responsible for determining the nature, extent and timing of the external audit procedures. All judgements relating to the audit of the financial statements are ours.

As external auditors we consider the activities of the internal audit function and their effect, if any, upon our own procedures. Where appropriate we seek to use the work of internal audit as a form of evidence available to us to avoid the duplication of audit effort. Our overall responsibility is not reduced by any use of internal audit work but it is a form of evidence available to us. As external auditors we obtain an understanding of internal audit activities to assist us in planning the audit. This facilitates the development of an effective audit approach.

The following systems were reviewed:

- Purchases

Overall Assessment

Overall, we found that the Academy's systems and internal financial controls in the above areas were operating effectively. We did note some areas where the documented controls were not being applied in practice.

We have made a low graded recommendation for the year.

Our recommendations have been graded as follows:

- High recommendations represent fundamental control weaknesses, which expose the Academy to a high degree of unnecessary risk.
- Medium recommendations represent significant control weaknesses, which expose the Academy to a moderate degree of unnecessary risk.
- Low recommendations show areas where we have highlighted opportunities to implement a good or better practice, to improve efficiency or further reduce exposure to risk.

ACCOUNTING AND INTERNAL CONTROL

Current and Prior year recommendations

System and Controls Evaluated	Results of Control Evaluation and Testing	Recommendation	Management Response
Fixed asset register	Upon review of the fixed asset register, it was noted that the report does not detail the cost or depreciation of each asset. Going forward, it will be difficult to allocate specific cost and depreciation to assets eg, when they are disposed if this is not maintained. We raised this issue in the prior year, but it remains unresolved. Maintaining detailed records is essential to ensure accurate financial reporting and compliance.	We recommend the fixed asset register is updated to include the cost and depreciation of each asset. (low)	

