

**LEEP Internal Audit – December 2013**  
**Response to recommendations**

Expected Control or Testing Undertaken	Recommendation	Strategic Group Response
1. The LA has a formal strategy for monitoring and intervening in schools causing concern.	Once the Creative Services Section has 'professionalised' the strategy document, it should be 'rolled out' / published as planned.	Due to be sent out to all schools – Feb 14
2. The Partnership is appropriately constituted (e.g. LA officers, headteacher reps., diocesan reps., Cabinet Lead Member etc).	In light of the concerns of the Association of Leicestershire Governors, consideration should be given to expanding membership to include a greater proportion of governors, perhaps to include all sectors (e.g. primary, special and secondary governors; LA-maintained and academy governors).	Strategic group concluded that GDS provides good representation for governors and increased representation would not be necessary. LEEP seminar feedback indicated that governors were satisfied with arrangements
3. Meetings are chaired by officers of appropriate seniority and experience.  Meetings are adequately clerked and minuted.	The minutes for each meeting of the LEEP Strategic Group should be explicit as to which individual has chaired the meeting.  The minutes of the Group should be clear that all attendees present have been given an opportunity to declare any pecuniary or other interests as a standard agenda item each time.	Strategic group agreed that arrangements for Chairing the meetings need to be outlined in minutes
4. Attendance at meetings is good.	All key group representatives should be reminded of the importance of them being represented on the Strategic	Agreed – all groups have been represented at meetings

## Appendix B

	Group and, in the event of not being able to attend, should be encouraged to nominate a substitute representative.	
5. Data is collected by the LA from a number of key sources (e.g. hard intelligence (OfSTED gradings, exam results, demand for places, financial data, number of exclusions); soft intelligence (e.g. parental complaints, intelligence from “armchair auditors”, comments of elected members).	<p>The LA should consider the merits of undertaking annual checks on academies’ published financial statements (that should be readily accessible on academies’ web-sites) to gain some assurance that each academy is financial stable and at the very least that each academy considers itself to be a ‘going concern’ and that their external auditors are in accord with this judgement.</p> <p>If this is, by volume, unmanageable, there may be alternative strategies, for example to check the financial standing only of those academies that have already been flagged as causing other (probably educational) concerns.</p> <p>It may be that such checks are deemed to be outside of the scope of LEEP – i.e. financial issues rather than ones of pure educational attainment – but nevertheless, financial failure should be a very real risk to the LA given its wider statutory responsibilities.</p>	Strategic group considered this recommendation and agreed that this is beyond the current remit of LEEP. Where concerns such as this are raised, they will be addressed by the local authority and the Education Funding Agency (EFA)
6. Data held is only that which the LA has a legal right to hold.	Once agreed by Legal Services, the data sharing agreement should be appropriately published and shared with key stakeholders.	Final amendments to be agreed then circulated – Feb 14
7. The LA holds contextual information (for parental use) on all schools (e.g. performance data,	Consideration should be given to, rather than simply publishing generic links to the OfSTED web-site and the DfE Performance data site, linking from individual school’s data pages on the LCC web-site directly to specific performance data / OfSTED reports for that particular school.	Strategic Group believes that there is sufficient information in the public domain for parents and carers to make an informed choice about where their child goes to school.

<p>admissions criteria, OfSTED report).</p>		
<p>8. The LA does not baulk at the representation of a school causing concern as such (i.e. it acts impartially to give parents the best choice possible).</p> <p>Conversely, the LA does not baulk at actively promoting (“championing”) high performing schools in an area to parents.</p>	<p>The LA should give consideration to whether, as part of its statutory duty to ‘actively promote a diverse supply of strong schools’ and in its role to act as ‘champion for children, young people, parents, carers and families’, it should be proactive in highlighting the best schools within the County, e.g. through comparative performance data and by publishing OfSTED gradings, direction of travel.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that such proactive measures, however well intentioned, bring with it a risk of conflict with some categories of school.</p>	<p>Strategic Group believes that there is sufficient information in the public domain for parents and carers to make an informed choice about where their child goes to school.</p> <p>Recent examples indicate current approach is working well.</p>

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