



Leigh Academies Trust

Leigh Academies Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) that exists to support academies with building upon their existing strengths and to help them achieve rapid educational transformation. It was formed in 2008 with the linking of The Leigh Technology Academy and Longfield Academy under one governing body.

The Trust currently encompasses around 20,000 students between the ages of 2 and 19 across thirty primary, secondary and special academies.

Leigh Academies Trust is driven by a boundless ambition to achieve excellence for all and create confident young adults: a philosophy that shapes everything within the Trust.

Sarah Tucker, IT Project Manager Leigh Academies Trust picks up the story:

“We want our students to achieve their full potential both during their time in school and after that. For our students to be successful in an increasingly digital society, we need to ensure that each of them has access to high quality digital tools.”

Longfield Academy, one of the founder academies of the Leigh Academies Trust, was an early advocate of 1:1 learning - with an iPad programme which was internationally recognised for its impact in the classroom.

But as Sarah points out, there were opportunities for improvement:

“With the original Longfield model, there was a significant financial and administrative burden on the academy.

“This experience helped to shape and develop our thinking around 1:1 learning. We could see it worked as a methodology, but we needed to find a more efficient way of delivering it from a financial and administrative perspective.”

Enter Freedom Tech

After this realisation, the Trust engaged with Freedom Tech as a proven provider of 1:1 learning programmes.

Sarah explains: “As a trust, we sat down with Freedom Tech to talk about how they could help us deliver the same vision for 1:1 learning more efficiently to all our academies.

“Their approach was like a breath of fresh air. They were happy to get our finance teams at academy-level and trust-level up to speed and were very experienced in speaking to academy Principals about how to deliver 1:1 device programmes in the most effective way.

“It was a compelling proposition: to free up more internal resource for us by having Freedom Tech field calls, communicate with parents and administer the programme at an individual academy level. In previous delivery models, all of those things had to be done by the academy, distracting them from their core purpose - delivering high quality education.”

The starting point

With Freedom Tech in place as the delivery partner for their 1:1 programme, plans were put in place for the first academy deployment using the new approach: The Leigh Academy in Dartford.

Sarah continues: “Freedom Tech worked closely with our IT team to ensure the device programme was aligned with the infrastructure and the wider delivery of IT within the academy.



"Refreshingly, Freedom Tech are completely device agnostic. Their team spoke to our staff about the types of devices they wanted to use and how that would fit with the various teaching styles at play. This process culminated in a device trial and selection process to ensure we got the right device for the right students.

"We overcame challenges as they arose and progressively got to a point where we felt we had a process in place that worked."

With a model that was proven in one academy, Leigh Academies Trust has since gone on to deploy thousands of devices each year across several academies within the trust.

Changing technology

The recent partnership with Getech has helped Leigh Academies Trust further embed the Google education ecosystem.

"From Google Workspace for Education on the productivity and collaboration side, through to Chromebooks on the device side, we really value the Google platform and what it gives us across our academies.

"The 11.6 rugged Lenovo 300e is a popular choice. They stand up to the rigours of classroom life really well, which is crucial for a 1:1 device.

"Both staff and students love using the platform and the various tools", summarises Sarah.

Continuing the learning

With an extremely strong provision for post-16 education across the Trust, Freedom Tech have also helped to craft a compelling proposition for students wishing to continue their learning at one of the Trust's post-16 centres.

Sarah explains: "Year 7 to Year 11 are well covered with the Tech 4 Learners 1:1 device programme from Freedom Tech. We are also looking to use Tech Over Time - a fully managed personal finance programme that gives further education students access to the latest technology fully insured and interest free.

"Tech Over Time gives young people the ability to buy from a vast range of devices and even allows them to extend payments beyond their education with us. It has the potential to be a strong part of our student recruitment proposition as it gives access to the technology they need in exchange for low cost monthly payments."





Why Freedom Tech

When asked about why Freedom Tech have been the ideal partner for Leigh Academies Trust, Sarah is clear:

"Freedom Tech have been fantastic from the outset. They are there from the very beginning: they go in and speak to the principal, take responsibility for initiating the programme and help to field questions within the academy.

"They really help on the marketing and communications side too, fielding questions from academies and also at parents evenings.

"Freedom Tech are empowered to work directly with our academies and the IT team don't hear about them from one day to the next. They are fully accountable for the seamless delivery.

"Our device renewal plan is now heavily reliant on the quality of service and value for money that Freedom Tech provide: they are helping us to deliver digital access that would simply be unachievable without their support.

"All of the team at Freedom Tech are friendly, approachable, and make all information very easy to understand. They explain exactly what we as a Trust need to do to operate a fair and transparent device programme and offer the same level of care and diligence in their approach with our academies too.

"Our central IT Services and Finance teams don't get burdened with any additional work. Freedom Tech are able to do all the heavy lifting and completely look after all the administration side of things. It's a huge efficiency saver for us as a MAT."