

Value for Money Statement
Academy trust name: Whitburn C of E Academy
Academy trust company number: 07465520
Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as Accounting Officer of Whitburn C of E Academy 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.

Improving educational results: The pass rate for 5 A*-C GCSE grades including English and Maths was 84%. (2013 = 77%) This remains well above the national average, which fell to 56%. In English (91%) and Maths (88%) the percentage of pupils making at least 3 levels of progress continues to be well above the national figures (70% and 71% respectively). The 2014 GCSE results were by some distance the best in the history of the school.

To ensure that standards are continually raised, the Academy:

- Operated a programme of lesson observations to ensure high quality teaching.
- Use a target setting system to motivate pupils and to benchmark progress.
- Tracked pupil progress at regular intervals to intervene if progress slowed.
- Regular revision sessions were held after school, during holiday periods and weekends.
- Underachieving pupils were allocated a senior member of staff as a mentor.

Targeted improvement: Staffing structure is deployed to support an improved curriculum. Some recent examples are:

- Extra staff were employed in English, Maths and Science, to enable small group support and intervention.
- Pre and after school booster sessions were in place as well as 'master classes' during lessons' time in mathematics.
- Support staff have been trained in Read Write Inc programme and providing sessions before and after school to meet the needs of pupils in Numeracy and Literacy, particularly those on the SEN register or the Pupil Premium cohort.
- Targeted support for Year 7 pupils who came to the school at under level 4 in English and/or maths was provide, in line with the Governments' 'Year 7 catch Up Premium'.

Focus on individual pupils:

The impact of the Pupil Premium funding has been to support and enhance our existing intervention strategies for pupils who would otherwise have been disadvantaged and has allowed them to experience the full range of opportunities offered. Some examples are:

- Year 7 Catch Up sessions (including all those pupils arriving at school at below level 4 in Maths and or English – funded through Year 7 Literacy and Numeracy Catch-Up Premium).

- Small group and one to one support using additional specialist Mathematics and English teaching staff, during lessons
- Booster sessions in Mathematics and English before school and Master classes, during lessons
- Lunchtime Numeracy and Literacy session delivered by Pupil Premium Tutors to year 8 and 9 pupils
- Subsidising school trips
- One to one with internal tutor
- Support with uniform purchase
- Purchasing lesson specific materials – eg Food Technology ingredients, Art materials, calculator, revision guides, texts
- Personalised provision (Offsite)/Vocational Learning
- Personalised provision (Onsite /Bridge Centre)
- Financial assistance for additional Music tuition or purchase of musical equipment
- Pupil premium pupils on Vocational Learning course taken on residential placement as part of accreditation
- Additional counselling (to address wellbeing and as a consequence help remove barriers to learning)
- Nurture group to support vulnerable pupils in the transition to secondary
- Provision of Kindles, laptops and Internet access.
- Enabling through the contribution of extra funds the provision of whole school resources to support learning including MyMaths, GCSE PoD, Mathswatch and the Accelerated Reading programme.
- Year 8 Skills to Shine summer school
- Additional Careers guidance to address PP aspiration.

Whilst the Pupil Premium provides us with much needed additional funding, we always focus on the individual needs of pupils regardless of their background and devote appropriate resources to ensure that all pupils can achieve.

Collaboration:

The school achieved Teaching School Status and our Principal was awarded 'National Leader of Education' status this academic year. This will enable the academy to play a leading role in the development of schools within the region. The Principal plays a lead role in the Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle, being Chair of the Middle and Secondary School Improvement Partnership. The trust has engaged with other educational providers and experts to share delivery or good practice, and to drive up standards for the least cost. The academy has provided direct support to four schools in the last two years and has been recognised as a National Support School for the impact of this work.

New initiatives:

The school spent £6500 on the purchase of GCSEPod to enable access to our pupils to online resources via their mobile device. We have also invested significantly (£12 000) in the provision of a new website, by an external company. This will help us improve our communication with parents and the wider community.

Quantifying improvements:

Published Government data such as Raiseonline and DfE performance tables all indicate sustained high performance in educational attainment, behaviour and attendance. In 2012 we were named as one of top 100 schools in the country for pupil progress from Key Stage 2 to GCSE and we are the only school in the region to appear in the prestigious Sunday Times list of the Top 50 11 to 16 schools in England for four years in succession. Our GCSE results for 2014 broke all previous records and no doubt the publication of the Department of Education Performance Tables for 2014 will bring further accolades.

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 the Clive Owen & Co taking on additional internal control audits;
- The work of the external auditor;
- The work of the senior leaders within the academy trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

The academy trust's system of internal financial control is based on the EFA framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- Comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by Governors.
- Regular reviews by the Estates and Finance committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes.
- Clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines.
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties.
- Identification and management of risks.

Better purchasing:

A register of all services and contracts has been developed and all contracts are appraised or renegotiated in a timely manner to get the best mix of quality and effectiveness. Three year contracts have been entered to ensure reduced cost where it was felt that this would benefit the Academy.

Options appraisal:

The Governors and Senior Leadership Team apply the principles of best value when making decisions about:

- The allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the school.
- The targeting of resources to best improve standards and the quality of provision.
- The use of resources to best support the various educational needs of all pupils.

- The Academy 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 under £1000 direct from known, reliable suppliers (e.g. stationery, small equipment).

Better income generation:

The Academy is in partnership with SchoolsPlus; an organisation that will market and generate income through the hire of the Academy facilities.

Reviewing controls and managing risks:

The academy trust’s system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular, it includes:

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the board of governors;
- regular reviews by the Estates and Finance Committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines.
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- identification and management of risks.

The board of Governors has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and has decided:

- to appoint Clive Owen & Co LLP as internal auditor providing an on-going independent oversight of the Academy’s financial affairs

The internal auditor’s role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the academy trust’s financial systems. On a termly basis, the auditor reports to the board of Governors, through the Estates and Finance Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the board of trustees’ financial responsibilities.


The external auditors have delivered their schedule of work as planned and no material control issues have arisen as a result of their work.

The governors have reviewed the key risks to which the academy is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks.

The governors are of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks; this process will be regularly reviewed by the governors.

Lessons learned:

Our annual development plan sets out the strategies we will use to provide the best possible education for young people of all abilities, based on an inclusive, balanced and broad curriculum. On that basis we constantly review and refine our practice. An evaluation of the impact of the development plan always then informs the next year's plan.

Signed: 
Name: Alan Hardie
Academy Trust Accounting Officer
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