

Value for Money Statement
Academy trust name: Whitburn C of E Academy
Academy trust company number: 07465520
Year ended 31 August 2013

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 77%. (2012 = 75%) This remains well above the national average, which fell to 57%. In English (85%) and Maths (83%) the percentage of pupils making at least 3 levels of progress continues to be well above the national figures (68% and 69% respectively).

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:

- 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.
- Staffing ratios in Maths were improved by the deployment of four of the Senior Management Team to allow a reduction in Year 11 class sizes in preparation for the GCSE exams.
- Staffing ratios in English, MFL and Science have been improved through the recruitment of salaried School Direct trainees for 2013/14.

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:

- Introduction of the Accelerated Reading and Mathematics programmes in Years 7 & 8.
- Faculty based Learning Support Assistants to offer one to one and small group subject based support
- Tuition provided for Pupil Premium pupils through teaching staff additional hours.
- Personalised provision including college course fees, transport and staffing costs related to Work-Related Learning placements

Collaboration: 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. This includes being a

strategic partner in a teaching school alliance with Harton Technology College, which allows for the sharing of good practice with other schools through this network. For five years, the academy has led the organisation and delivery of a CPD day for all secondary schools in South Tyneside; this has involved up to 900 members of staff being involved in 16 separate training events at cost of less than £20 per head.

New initiatives: Additional funding, made available through Pupil Premium, was provided to support our pupils. The support included GCSE Booster classes and in class support through a specialist mathematics teacher, extra support in Numeracy and Literacy, the purchase of Accelerated Maths and English and training in Read Write inc for our support staff (Numeracy).

Quantifying improvements: Published Government data such as Raiseonline and DfE performance tables all indicate sustained high performance in educational attainment, behaviour and attendance. For example, the school was named as one of the top 100 schools nationally in terms of progress from Key Stage 2 when measured against performance in pupils' best 5 GCSE results including English and Maths.

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 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 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 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 has entered into 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 has appointed a Governor responsible for audit who liaises with the audit team and reports back to Governing Body. Clive Owen have been appointed as external auditors and have been also intrusted with aspects of internal audit as agreed with the Governing Body.

Budget holders, management and governors receive regular budget reports which are scrutinised to ensure the most effective use of resources to meet the objectives of the trust.


The Academy has an investment policy and has moved balances to an interest bearing account to ensure maximum returns on surplus balances. This is reported to the governing body and best options discussed on a regular basis.

Insurance levels are reviewed annually and used cost-effectively to manage risks.

The governors review the reserve levels of the Academy annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves.

The governors have determined that an appropriate level of free reserves should be maintained. The reason for this is to provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipt of grants and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies such as urgent maintenance and to plan for future capital projects.

Lessons learned: Our annual development plan sets out the strategies we will use to further improve pupil achievement attainment, together with any substantial additional costs and the most suitable funding source e.g. Pupil Premium. This is reviewed at termly governors meetings in autumn and summer. An evaluation of the impact of the plan always then informs the next year’s plan.

Signed: 

Name: Alan Hardie

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 10/12/2013