

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: Wallingford School Academy Trust

Company number: 7727786

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Wallingford School Academy Trust 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.

Effective Workforce Deployment

- The teaching workforce is effectively deployed, with a clear focus on developing high quality teachers, in all subject areas. Coaching / Mentoring groups are established to facilitate good practice across the school. Twice-weekly staff meetings include discussions to ensure successes and learning points are shared across departments.
- Performance Management Target setting is embedded for pay progression from 2014 onwards for teaching staff.
- Effective structuring of associate staffing to facilitate the support services to ensure smooth and efficient running of the school. The finance team was re-structured to include a part-time qualified accountant, to ensure timely financial information was presented in user-friendly formats, increasing confidence in our understanding of the financial implications of decision making.

Benchmarking

- Continuous data analysis and benchmarking of individual pupil predictions / attainment, generating targeted interventions to ensure each student makes the best possible progress from KS3 through to post-16. The progress of disadvantaged students and progress in English and Mathematics are ahead of the national average. Achievement has been raised year-on-year since conversion to Academy status.
- Membership of professional bodies and school leadership organisations, to access analysis of data and sharing of knowledge and experience, which informed our strategic decisions, helped determine the right mix of staffing, curriculum and administration costs and informed the school's own spending decisions. The Head is involved in the work and promotion of a number of school leadership organisations.

School Efficiency

- The School employs an experienced and qualified School Business Manager who takes on a leadership role
- The business manager belongs to forums, to share the working practices of the Academy Trust with other academies and explore efficiency savings / better ways of working.
- Increased use of IT to communicate with parents enabled us to absorb the necessary re-deployment of staff into finance, e.g. use of text messages to follow up non-attendance and growing use of the Visual Learning Environment and email for communication with parents and stakeholders.
- The Leisure Centre, let out to local clubs and societies, grew its sustainable income streams and made a modest surplus for the year, enabling the school to establish a fund to renew the astro-turf when it falls due, around 2020.
- A project to replace the school's flat roofing, funded by the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund, was brought in on budget and on time, over the summer break.
- Fortnightly meetings are held between the Head and Academy Accountant to review the budget plan and forecast and monitor the academy's expenditure.

Improving procurement

- Department expenditure is reviewed monthly and feedback given to budget holders, to ensure that all staff are reminded of their obligation to seek value for money as part of their routine activities
- The facilities manager reviewed all the facilities contracts this year, re-negotiating terms and/or putting many long-standing contracts out to tender, to ensure the school was obtaining best value.
- Regular Responsible Officer visits provide an excellent opportunity for review and reflection of the processes adopted

Effective Governance and Accountability

- Have in place a strong governance structure that effectively challenges all areas of the academies performance / outcomes
- The setting up of a new Audit Committee
- Provision of a 'Critical Friend' relationship, with governors meeting with departments / officers responsible for various aspects of the academies functions on a regular basis to discuss and familiarise themselves with the activities undertaken
- Termly meetings were held with the Chair of Resources, Head & Academy Accountant to review the detailed monitoring of the budget plan.

Name: Mr Nigel Willis
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 17 Dec 2014