

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: KATHARINE LADY BERKELEY'S SCHOOL

Company number: 7696921

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of KATHARINE LADY BERKELEY'S SCHOOL 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.

(A) IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL RESULTS

(1) Staffing Structure:

- * Within the overall aim to ensure the best possible outcomes for all students, there are particular emphases on:
 - Enabling disadvantaged students to achieve as well as other students through the effective use of pupil premium funding
 - Placing a greater focus on literacy across the curriculum in order to improve students' access to the curriculum and raise achievement
 - Developing students' use and development of mathematics across the curriculum
 - Improving the progress made by less able students in mathematics

* We have an Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for managing the support made available to students who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding who has developed our strategies during the year.

* Our whole school literacy coordination has now moved to the Senior Leadership team to promote the development of literacy across the curriculum.

* A responsibility allowance has been awarded to a member of the mathematics department to promote mathematics across the curriculum.

(2) Focus on individual pupils:

* The main focus of our pupil premium coordinator is to provide one to one and small group tuition support for disadvantaged students and also to provide additional support for these students in mathematics through their normal timetabled lessons. As these structures have developed, it is been possible to extend the support to other students who are vulnerable.

* The most able students in the school are supported by our Coordinator for Gifted and Talented students who work with the students concerned and support subject teachers in ensuring that there is suitable stretch and challenge.

* We are developing our monitoring systems to better identify students who are underachieving in order to identify suitable intervention strategies to provide suitable support.

(3) Collaboration:

* The trust works with other Gloucestershire schools through the active Gloucestershire Association of Secondary Headteachers. This provides a range of support, including financial and resource benchmarking which helps the trust to ensure that the various aspects of the operation are resourced appropriately.

(4) New initiatives:

* The continuing work with students eligible for Pupil Premium funding enables better support for disadvantaged students. The more efficient deployment of teaching staff across the curriculum has enabled a reduction in the number of teaching staff.

(5) Quantifying improvements:

- * The gap in three levels of progress in mathematics for students eligible for the pupil premium has fallen from 40% to 18%.
- * The value added score for the school has risen from 999.5 to 1009.0.
- * The average points score per entry at A level has risen for the fourth year in succession to 229.7 (DfE points score).
- * Persistent absence has fallen from 6.1% in 2012 to 4.3% in 2013 and now 3.7% in 2014.

(B) FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

The school's Management Committee (now Finance Committee) endorsed, and the Full Governing Body approved, the annual budget plan which was prepared jointly by the Head teacher (Accounting Officer) and Finance & Business Director, taking into account priorities identified in the School Development Plan. The Management/Finance Committee and Full Governing Body received regular budget reports showing the latest and forecast financial position, as well as planning and progress reports on all capital spend. The governors' Responsible Officer role was currently held by a chartered accountant (now replaced by a senior banking employee) who challenged financial reports and undertook reviews to check the robustness of financial systems and control. The school annual general meeting, at which the school's income and expenditure was explained together with any particular issues which have or are affecting the school's funding or costs, provided opportunity for public challenge by parents. The Finance & Business Director was responsible for counter-signing all orders/invoices routinely reviewing how resources are spent, challenging budget holders to ensure all purchases provide VfM

(1) Better purchasing:

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- * Through partnership working with Wotton Community Sports Foundation students were able to make regular use of the excellent adjacent all-weather pitches for PE lessons and matches at no cost (in exchange for the school's parking and changing facilities being used out-of-school hours by community users) allowing lessons to continue in all conditions. The costs of CCTV installation for the pitches was also shared saving the school around £3,000
- * All contracts were subject to review in advance of the renewal date in order to provide opportunity for renegotiation or alternative more competitive prices
- * A range of site maintenance works and processes have yielded tangible savings (albeit not all are readily quantifiable):
 - In-house procurement of materials (e.g. electrical) for contractors to avoid the standard 10% overhead on-cost (saving approx. £2,000)
 - "First fix" of cables / pipes etc. for contractors and finishing off once they have completed the "skilled / qualified" side (saving approx. £2,000)
 - In-house site repairs more cost effective than employing contractors e.g. Line marking, plumbing repairs, simple electrical repairs, phone repairs, decorating, system testing (emergency lights), fume cupboard testing, heating repairs, installation of IT kit
 - Renegotiation of washroom supplies to improve service and reduce cost (saving £200)
 - Use of school minibuses, rather than external coach hire, wherever possible
 - Avoiding the use of contractors and associated mark-up on equipment (saving approx. £4,000)
 - Recycling of materials and segregation of waste to reduce waste removal costs (saving approx. £3,000)

(2) Benchmarking:

The school has recently reviewed national/regional benchmarking data/information provided by two independent sources, as well on-going comparisons with other Gloucestershire schools. This data is being used to supplement the school's own financial information in identifying savings opportunities as part of its medium-term financial planning process which has identified the need to make budgetary reductions from 2015/16 due to falling pupil numbers

(3) Options appraisal:

- * The creation of a Capital Asset Development Plan, using prioritisation criteria (costs, benefits, impact upon curriculum delivery, condition, risk) ensured all significant improvement works were effectively evaluated before commissioning
- * The school's Finance Policy requires at least three written quotations for all orders between £1,000 and £50,000 to identify the best source of goods/services. All goods/services ordered with a value over £50,000, or for a series of contracts which in total exceed £50,000 are subject to formal tendering procedures. The tender process includes the setting out of a clear "needs specification" to ensure VfM is achieved when comparing quotes and taking decisions on whom to award contracts to. All spending decisions are founded upon securing the correct quality,

quantity and time scale for delivery at the best price possible. The school undertook 3 separate tenders for capital works over £50,000 and successfully secured the lowest prices whilst not compromising on quality or timescales

(4) Economies of scale:

* The school has continued to negotiate bulk order purchasing for its paper supply which has reduced administration costs and avoided stock-holding costs through a 'call-off' arrangement (i.e. stock is regularly delivered based upon an assessment of demand)

* A review by the Finance & Business Director of the internal procurement process (to produce a "preferred supplier" list to improve VfM and reduce administration costs) planned for 2013/14 was deferred to 2014/15

* As part of the school's strategy to further improve its links to local primary schools, opportunities for joint procurement continued to be explored e.g. stationery. It is hoped that this will come to fruition in 2014/15

(5) Better income generation:

* The school successfully undertook a number of capital improvements during 2013/14 with a value of £0.83M. This has been greatly assisted through joint-working with a property consultant to access government grant funding

* Implementation of the school's revised management arrangements for the letting of its sports' facilities is imminent and it is forecast that through marketing of these facilities that additional untapped demand will increase revenue to the school for reinvestment. The school will continue to identify other opportunities for raising additional revenue

(6) Reviewing controls and managing risks:

* Regular management reports were received by the school's Management/Finance Committee and Full Governing Body (see Financial governance and oversight section)

* The school regularly reviewed its cash balances to identify opportunities for short-term investment and to ensure the school was not exposed to the risk of holding insufficient funds to meet its financial obligations

* Through the Crescent Purchasing Consortium procurement framework and tendering process, the school successfully secured £31,000 of savings by re-tendering its 3-year insurance contract

* Major purchases of furniture and equipment are controlled by the Finance & Business Director and all purchasing decisions are based upon an understanding and assessment of need. Surplus furniture was and continues to be recycled internally wherever possible

(C) LESSONS LEARNED:

Having an understanding of how investment of cash and staff time affects the school's effectiveness (in terms of impact upon academic attainment) and efficiency (in terms of maximising resources) continues to be fundamental to strong governance and management, and a necessary focus in future planning, setting of priorities and investment particularly given the financial outlook.

Name: Andrew Harris Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 12 December 2014

Name: Mr Andrew Harris
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 19 Dec 2014