



Featherstone High School

Value For Money Statement

Academy trust company number: 07800029

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of **Featherstone High 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 have 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:

The core mission of the Academy Trust is to provide a high quality education for all students on roll as encompassed in our school motto "Together We Achieve." The academy's main strategy in realising this mission revolves around our 4 strategic cornerstones:

1. A relentless focus on teaching and learning
2. Rigorous data tracking and intervention systems
3. A rich and varied curriculum
4. A strong code of behaviour

Value for Money has been achieved within each of these four areas as evidenced by the academy's on-going value added. Consolidating the 3 Deputy Headteacher structure at the academy with one deputy assigned to oversee each of the academy's 3 key teams – Teacher Developers, Curriculum Developers and Pupil Progress, allowed the continuation of success in the four key areas highlighted. Some additional examples of spending in these areas are shown below:

1. **Teaching and Learning** – provided additional non-contact time for all members of the Teacher Developer Team for lesson observation work; the continuation of a Lead Learning Practitioners posts; the addition to our structure of 2 Lead Practitioner posts paid on the Leadership scale to focus on continually improving teaching and learning especially through Coaching strategies; continued to develop Blue Sky to host all T&L and Appraisal related information; additional Consultancy and TD Team admin staff time was required to support this;
2. **Data Tracking and Intervention** – further development of 4 Matrix software, continuation of an Associate Assistant Headteacher to boost leadership capacity.

Strategies for use of Pupil Premium funding included:

- Additional year 7 catch up subsidy
- 12 periods of other timetabled boosters
- 19 additional periods in years 9 to 11 (use of extended day)
- 9 periods of 1 to 1 support for student in receipt of pupil premium with medical needs
- Reduced class sizes in each KS4 year group 2 X 60 X 3 X 19 X £36.20 (from 8 to 10 forms of entry)
- Free revision guides in GCSE subjects
- LBSC tutoring
- Additional Maths group in year 10 (11 groups)
- Additional science group in year 10 (11 groups)

- Additional 2 English groups in year 11 (12 groups)
- Additional 2 Maths groups in year 11 (12 groups)
- Additional 2 Science groups in year 11 (12 groups)
- Connexions support
- February half term booster programme
- Easter holiday booster programme
- May half term booster programme
- Responsibility payments AAHT &TLR
- Educational visits and curriculum week subsidy
- Rewards for students
- 4 periods of EAL support for KS4 classes
- Food technology subsidy
- Exercise and text books and stationery subsidy
- Breakfast club subsidy
- EBSI (Careers and WRL)

3. **Curriculum** – additional non-contact time for all members of the Curriculum Developer Team for lesson observation; significant INSET development time to support the multitude of changes implemented by the Government; Admin Assistant appointed to support the Curriculum Developer Team; continuation of Associate Assistant Headteacher post to boost leadership capacity in this area; staffing in E Bacc subjects was boosted also.

4. **Behaviour** – Exclusion rates remain significantly below local and national averages. Our overall attendance is up by 0.5% from 95.4% (2012-13) to 95.9% 2013-14. This is above the Ealing average by 0.4%. The Local Authority benchmark analysis shows that we are graded as “very good and well above average” when compared with LA statistical neighbours achieving a Grade A* for comparisons with statistical neighbours with similar FSM. However, the number of Persistent Absentees has gone up for a 2nd successive year (3.1% 2012-13 to 4.2% 2013-14) and is a priority area for us.

Impact as measured by outcomes

GCSE/BTEC L2 results

The % 5+A*- C including English and Maths dropped to 50% (2012-13 = 61%) although most indicators reveal progression in terms of value added. Early release DfE figures show that there was a national fall in the 5A*-C inc En & Ma measure of 7%. Schools serving disadvantaged areas with larger numbers of students on the C/D borderline have been disproportionately affected due to key contributing factors such as the change from modular to linear exams, reduction in contribution of coursework, removal of early entries. It should also be highlighted that the 2014 GCSE cohort was the lowest ability starting point we have had for 5 years and was very boy heavy (60% boys). It is always best to consider these starting points and make judgements about how far the children have travelled compared to similar schools nationally. 10 subjects exceeded 2013 national levels of progress and English and Maths both exceeded their top quartile progress targets (called FFT D). It is difficult to draw too many conclusions about our relative performance until the 2014 results for similar schools are released and analysed in the Raiseonline document in December 2014.

The governors are aware that the government has introduced a new key performance measure which will be used from 2016 onwards. It is called the Progress 8 measure is designed to encourage schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum at KS4, and reward schools for the teaching of all their pupils equally. The new measure will be based on students' progress measured across eight subjects: English; mathematics (both carry a double weighting) three other English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects (sciences, computer science, geography, history and languages); and three further subjects, which can be from the range of EBacc subjects, or can be any other approved, high-value arts, academic, or vocational qualification. We reshaped our curriculum 2 years ago to reflect this measure and our current software package suggests a very positive performance against that measure of +0.7.

A big focus of the government at present is how well we are using Pupil Premium to raise achievement of disadvantaged children. For us this represents over 50% of our cohort. Our attainment gap was 6%, the national gap in 2013 for this measure was 26.5%.

Furthermore, post 16 students saw a 98% A level or equivalent pass rate (2013 = 97%, 2012 = 94%) with 98% also achieving 3 or more A Level passes (2013 = 97%, 2012 = 95%).

University Progression

83% of students from last year's Upper Sixth were successful in securing a place at a university of their choice, this rises to 96% if our Gap Year students are included who will be applying this year. The academy is significantly ahead of the national rate for university progression which is 70% for non-selective comprehensive schools.

Collaboration

During 2013/14 the academy seconded a senior member of staff to support Ellen Wilkinson High School during their time of need. This member of staff was subsequently employed as a permanent Deputy Headteacher by Ellen Wilkinson at the end of the academic year. The school also worked with a number of partners such as the Institute of Education to provide leadership training for aspiring leaders.

Financial Governance and Oversight

The Governors have assessed the major risks to which the Academy is exposed, in particular those relating to the specific teaching, provision of facilities and other operational areas of the Academy, and its finances. The Governors have implemented a number of systems to assess risks that the school faces, especially in operational areas such as teaching, health and safety, bullying and school trips as well as those relating to the control of finance. They have introduced robust systems, including operational procedures such as the vetting of new staff (CRB checks), supervision of school grounds and internal financial controls to manage and minimise risk.

The identification of risks is a core activity at Featherstone High School. The Governors take a proactive approach to risk management with the aim of protecting its employees and students and safeguarding the interests of the Academy and its community.

Featherstone High School has policies and procedures in place to ensure that risks are suitably evaluated and managed at the appropriate level within the Academy. The identification of risks, the development of action plans to manage the risks and the

continual monitoring of progress against agreed plans is an integral part of the business process, and a core activity throughout the Academy in achieving value for money.

Internal control is exercised at the school with monthly monitoring of performance by comparison with budgets, actuals and forecasts. The Business/Finance Manager aims to review every invoice prior to payment to ensure all administrative procedures have been completed correctly but more importantly assess the transaction for integrity, appropriateness and best value. Concerns are raised with the Headteacher. Additionally, the Headteacher signs every cheque/BACS run for the value of £2,000 and above.

Furthermore weekly meetings take place between the Business/Finance Manager and Headteacher to discuss a variety of items, including budget areas where there is pressure. Budget Monitoring is discussed once a month with budgets, actuals, and forecasts playing a major part with regards to assessing value for money. Governors also receive management accounts prior to every finance committee meeting and continuously provide a good challenge to maintain the overall vision.

All Governors and major budget holders are asked to complete a Declaration of Interests form on an annual basis. This informs the school of any related party transactions. Moving forward, any work carried out by a related party over the value of £2.5k will be on a nil profit basis

CEFM acts as the school's Responsible Officer with 3 compulsory visits per year carried out and reports written for governors. The school voluntarily purchased 2 additional days to audit the work of IT and the Sports Centre. There were recommendations made with regards to the IT Procurement which were communicated to the IT Network Manager with expectations emphasised. The SLT lead and governors were informed also. The IT Network Manager has since moved onto pastures new.

Smarter Spending

Communication between all senior stakeholders is key to maintain a shared vision and unique selling point. The continuation of challenging each other and not settling for second best is also vital to ensure the Academy continues to break trends and achieves value for money for the taxpayer.

Where orders are of significant value, the Academy tendering procedure is applied and governors involved in discussions i.e. they were involved during the tendering procedure for purchasing 6th form netbooks as well as authorising the purchase of a new fire alarm. Part of the process is to challenge effectiveness with spend such as additional iPads, PC's and netbooks in mind. Pupil data is monitored to evaluate effectiveness.

Other areas considered:

- Staff Costs – The Academy continues to have good levels of staffing to achieve results and progression. Staffing costs were approximately 74% of all revenue, which is prudent as well as sustainable over a 3 year cycle. The ever changing funding climate is at the forefront of our thoughts when setting a long term vision.
- Continued to bulk buy exercise books
- Updated the Preferred Suppliers list including a complete overhaul of Facilities related contractors – carried out procurement exercises including securing references for bigger contractors to ensure transparency i.e. drainage, electrics, plant, blinds, tarmac and provide a more user friendly site

- More efficient use of unused outdoor space to provide solution for additional parking, curriculum requirements
- Clear IT Asset Register is in place which is continuously updated to monitor movement of items and add new items to safeguard school assets
- Regular budget monitoring and discussions with Governors / Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team to best utilise any surplus in line with School Development Plan
- Continued sharing of SEN/Literacy/Foreign Language staff in collaboration with local schools
- The Academy was successful with 2 bids for funding from the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund. LRC upper was built with LRC lower acting as a space for quiet study sessions for 6th form students. The building is also used as an additional space for exams. The new roofing project is ongoing and due for completion by Christmas 2014. This will provide improved insulation for many of the older 1960's buildings whilst providing a small saving on energy costs, and more importantly vast sums of money that were spent on correcting constant roof leaks will be saved. All this money can be redirected to teaching and learning.
- Insurance purchased through Zurich and risk minimised – Zurich contingency site survey carried out by partner company Portakabin to create an action plan with business continuity in mind.
- Catering service outsourced to private company – bigger and better meal deals as required by students, a much more professional operation in terms of hygiene, health and safety, kitchen management and protocols, bigger buying power and less wastage.
- Cleaning service to be managed by private company also – should lead to a healthier and cleaner site

Lessons Learned

- Continue to appraise all annual contracts to achieve best mix of quality and effectiveness
- Continue with additional responsible officer/professional audits to provide appropriate independent challenges for staff ensuring clarity over public funds
- Continue to collaborate with other schools and gain knowledge of best value for money contractors through local Business Group, Headteacher and other stakeholder information sharing meetings
- Benchmark against similar Academies when data made available by EFA

Signed: 

Name: Gerry Wadwa

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 3 December 2014