



# **Featherstone High School**

## **Value For Money Statement**

Academy trust company number: 07800029

Year ended 31 August 2013

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 examination success. Increasing staffing expenditure last year allowed the academy to implement a 3 Deputy Head teacher structure with one deputy assigned to oversee each of the academy's 3 key teams – Teacher Developers, Curriculum Developers and Pupil Progress. 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 and 2 new Lead Learning Practitioners posts; purchased Blue Sky software to host all T&L and Appraisal related information – additional Consultancy and a TD Team admin staff appointment was required to support this;
2. **Data Tracking and Intervention** – purchase and development of 4 Matrix software; appointment of a Senior Administrative Assistant; appointment of an Associate Assistant Head teacher to boost leadership capacity;

Strategies for Use of Pupil Premium funding included:

- Reduction of class sizes for English and Maths (Av GCSE class = 21.8)  
Reduction in class size to under 14 for key groups
- Additional 1.5 hrs of teaching of English and Maths for 100 Y11 students.
- Revision Support for Year 11 in the February, April and May Holidays.
- 1-1 student support in the LBSC
- Membership of the PIXI partnership (Multi-school partnership geared to raising achievement at KS4)
- Academic Mentors for underachieving students.
- After School Coursework catch up sessions for Year 11 students
- Booster lessons in English and Maths

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; appointment of Associate Assistant Head teacher (CD Team) to boost leadership capacity in this area; staffing in E Bacc subjects was boosted;
4. **Behaviour and Attendance** – boosting staffing in this area included appointment of and Acting AHT Inclusion, Acting TLR Pupil Progress, TA to oversee Inclusion; broadening of the role of the Learning Mentor to support TLR Teams in investigating Behaviour and Attendance issues;

## **Impact as measured by outcomes**

### **GCSE/BTEC L2 results**

The % 5+A\*- C including English and Maths was 61%. This is above the national average and in line with local Ealing average from a significantly below average Key Stage 2 starting point. Excellent progress was made by these students from Year 7 and the top quartile GCSE target (FFT D) set by Governors for this year group was exceeded. Draft national comparisons place the academy in the top 8% schools in the country for progress based on 5+A\*-C including English and Maths; the top 2% of schools for both English and Maths progress – English moves to the top 1% schools in the country when we look at the 3 year average for progress children make at secondary school.

In 2012 14% students were entered for E Bacc subjects (English, Maths, Science, History or Geography and a Language), in 2013 it was 59%. The academy has more than doubled the pass rate in these more challenging subject areas from 11% in 2012 to 24% in 2013.

Pupil Premium strategies outlined above are demonstrating excellent VfM in raising achievement of disadvantaged children (over 50% of the academy cohort). Outcomes for FSM students significantly exceeded national averages and last year this was by +13% for 5A\*-C inc En and Ma, this rises to +25% in English and +23% in Maths.

### **Sixth Form Results** (last year's results shown in brackets)

The Academy achieved a 98% (97%) pass rate at A2 and the equivalent BTEC Level 3 with 48% (40%) grades at A\*- B. The % of students achieving 3+ passes was 98% (83%) which placed the academy top equal in Ealing on this measure. The academy changed the post 16 curriculum two years ago to reduce numbers of students taking 4 A levels as most universities require 3 good A levels – the success of this strategy is seen in the 98% 3+ pass rate.

### **University Progression**

75% of students from last year's Upper Sixth were successful in securing a place at a university of their choice, this rises to 84% 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.

### **Behaviour and Attendance**

Exclusion rates remain significantly below local and national averages. During 2012/2013 there were zero permanent exclusions. Local Authority attendance benchmark analysis shows that the academy is graded as “well above average” when compared with LA statistical neighbours and national averages.

### **Collaboration**

During 2012/2013 the academy successfully seconded a senior member of staff to support Northolt High School in coming out of Special Measures.

### **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.

With the above systems in place breaches were recently identified with regards to the repairs and maintenance of facilities. The work carried out during summer 2013 by one supplier in particular did not represent best value. Following receipt of invoices, initial inspections of work were carried out by the Headteacher and Finance Manager. The Chair of the Premises Committee who works in the building trade was also invited to assess the quality of work. An inspection by an independent Chartered Surveyor was then organised by the school and the surveyor’s report highlighted poor value for money related to some of the summer building works. The school has gained legal advice and our Solicitors are in the process of communicating with the contractor with regards to recovering funds.

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 Academy with monthly monitoring of performance by comparison with budgets, actuals and forecasts. Weekly meetings take place between the 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.

The Academy has employed CEFM as Responsible Officer and termly internal audits are carried out with reports discussed at the Finance Committee. Ad Hoc services are also

purchased to for example audit the Sports Centre as well as audit other areas of spend such as building works as stated earlier.

### **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 when applicable. Part of the process is to challenge effectiveness with spend such as additional Ipads, PC's and Netbooks in mind. Pupil data is being monitored to evaluate effectiveness.

### Other areas considered:

- Staff Costs – The Academy continues to have good levels of staffing to achieve results and progression as stated earlier. Permanent staffing budget is approximately 75% 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.
- A tendering procedure was carried out with regards to photocopiers and value for money is being achieved in terms of service as well as cheaper cost per copy through the new contract
- The Academy is making use of additional photocopiers on site including high usage areas such as the library as photocopiers are better value for money than desktop printers
- Bulk buying items such as exercise books and stationery
- Contracts such as Planned Preventative Maintenance for Academy Facilities have been discussed at the Premises Committee, and discussions are ongoing with regards to either re-tendering or bringing the service in house
- 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
- 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. A new Boiler House is now in place with the second project underway and due for completion by February 2014.
- Insurance purchased through Zurich and risk minimised – Zurich contingency site survey to be carried out by partner company Portakabin to create an action plan with business continuity in mind

### **Lessons Learned**

- Appraise all annual contracts to achieve best mix of quality and effectiveness
- Start planning for summer works 2014 earlier than in previous years – by Easter if possible and involve school consultants during tendering procedure as and when required

- 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
- Higher interest deposit accounts to be sourced to make best use of surplus cash
- Benchmark against similar Academies when data made available by EFA

**Signed:** .....

**Name:** Gerry Wadwa

**Academy Trust Accounting Officer**

**Date:** 19 December 2013