

Value For Money Statement

Westwoodside Church of England Academy Trust

Academy Trust Company No 08161921

Period End 31st August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Westwoodside C of E 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.

Improving educational outcomes

Since January 2014 there has been a sharp focus on improving pedagogy for the benefit of all pupils. In May 2014 Ofsted noted that there were initial signs of improvement. This continues to be developed through a focus on high quality CPD which is leading to improvements in teaching and learning and is starting to impact on the attainment of all pupils especially those that are most vulnerable.

Targeted improvement and focus on individual pupils.

We work closely with a number of local schools and some further afield. This allows staff to work with lead teachers to improve their practice and to access joint training opportunities. In 2013-2014 we accessed support from the local teaching school. Targeted interventions have been developed to support the small number of children entitled to the Pupil Premium and SEN provision has been improved to meet a wider range of needs e.g. support for children finding maths difficult or those having difficulty with fine motor skills. A member of staff now has accountability for the progress of the more able children. In 2013-2014 children in receipt of the Pupil Premium had a positive value added.

Collaboration

Work with a local cluster of schools enables the Academy to access joint training and provides opportunities for staff to work together to develop expertise. Joint bids have been successful in supporting the work to raise standards and will continue in 2014-15.

New initiatives

A review of services is underway to ensure best value in terms of cost and quality e.g. change to website provider and other IT services. Changes in staffing have allowed governors to review costs in this area also.

Financial governance and oversight

As accounting officer I have responsibility for reviewing the systems of internal control. This year I have been informed by responsible officer visits; the work of the external auditor (Forrester and Boyd) and the work of the Business manager.

The academy's trusts system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management and administrative procedures which includes:

Comprehensive budget and monitoring systems (annual budget and periodic review)

Monthly reviews of reports which indicate financial positions against forecasts

Clearly defined purchasing guidelines which ensure the academy seeks best value

Delegation of authority and segregation of duties

Identification of and management of risk

Regular finance and personnel committee meetings review the budget monitoring reports and receive the responsible officer visit reports as well as the report from the external auditor.

Better purchasing

Contracts are appraised in a timely manner. Service level agreements have been reviewed to ensure they meet the academy's needs and offer value for money e.g. Health and Safety contract. Quotes are obtained for all purchases over £1000 and often for items below this value e.g. redecoration of the kitchen. Any member of staff placing an order is encouraged to check with a minimum of three different suppliers to ensure best value. Finance members are currently considering options for improvements to the IT system in the academy. The new business manager is exploring ways in which organisations such as 'Crown Commercial Services' can support our procurement.

Better income generation

Funding bids are completed for specific projects if the required criteria are met e.g. local schools collaborated to access support for developing writing in 2013-2014.

Reviewing controls and managing risks

A comprehensive finance policy is in place which segregates duties, clarifies tendering processes and ensures lines of accountability. Regular budget reports have been established to show variances of spend against budget. Governors make decisions to have the maximum impact on children. All governor meetings finish with a summary of the potential 'impact' on children and their learning. A focus for this work in 2013-2014 has been to direct more funding towards resourcing the curriculum and providing high quality CPD. Risks are reviewed regularly and a risk register is in place. An identified need to reduce 'supply' costs is in the early stages of being addressed and is leading to a review of staffing.

Lessons learned

Improvements in the way the budget is planned and monitored have been introduced in 2013-2014 which gives more detailed information to the leadership team and governors.

The leadership team reviews expenditure in different budget areas and makes adjustments based on the effectiveness of strategies introduced previously as well as on the results of pupils attainment and progress.

A new system of ordering has been introduced when items are purchased on-line.

Signed: 

Name: .J.Richardson

Accounting Officer Westwoodside Church Of England Academy Trust

Dated: 16/12/14