

Value for Money Statement

Tudor Grange Academy Worcester

Academy Trust company number: 06924496

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Tudor Grange Academy Worcester (the Academy), I am responsible and accountable for ensuring that the Academy 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's use of its resources has provided good value for money during the academic year. Throughout the year the academy was a single academy but worked in strong collaboration with Tudor Grange Academies Trust (the Trust). Since 1st September 2014 the academy has formally joined the Trust which will enhance the ability of all parties to gain from more economic and efficient practices as set out below.

Supporting students to reach their potential

The principal activity of the Academy is to provide free education for pupils of different abilities between the ages of 11 and 19, and to provide public benefit by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing a secondary school offering a broad and balanced curriculum.

The Academy is now in its sixth year of operation and most indicators reveal an upward trend in performance and a reversal of downward trends which prevented the predecessor school from coming out of special measures. The academy is heavily oversubscribed. There were 340 applicants for the 180 places available in year 7 in September 2014, 23 students gaining entry through appeal. The total number of students in the school as at the Autumn census 2014 was 897.

To ensure that standards are continually raised the Academy, the Governing Body and the Leadership Group:

- operate a robust quality assurance calendar which monitors the quality of teaching and learning and includes book trawls; and
- undertake a rigorous review of attainment using RAISEONLINE and FFTlive to measure the progress of students, paying particular regard to their achievement on entry and levels of progress secured with consequent interventions being defined through targeted staff deployment.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Academy during the year ended 31 August 2014 are summarised below:

- to ensure that every child enjoys the same high quality education in terms of resourcing,

tuition and care;

- to raise the standard of educational achievement of all pupils;
- to improve the effectiveness of the Academy by keeping the curriculum and organisational structure under continual review;
- to provide value for money for the funds expended;
- to maintain close links with industry and commerce; and
- to conduct the Academy's business in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, probity and openness.

Closing the achievements gap

On the new accountability measures with best entry in 2014 73% of pupil premium students made 3 levels progress in English compared to 59% of pupil premium students nationally and only 4 percentage points lower than non-pupil premium students nationally. In mathematics 65% of pupil premium students made 3 levels progress compared to 29% of pupil premium students nationally and 74% of non-pupil premium students nationally. This is evidence of the achievement gap closing in these core subjects.

Collaboration

As well as working with the schools in the Trust, the academy has also joined up with 4 local high schools on a collaborative Peer to Peer programme to share good practice and to look at strategic planning and how it impacts in the classroom.

Outcomes

The year evidenced the following:

- 22% of year 13 students went on to higher education in 2014.
- A further 74% went onto secure destinations in further education or employment, leaving 4% (1 student) not in education, employment or training.
- 96.5% of Year 11 students secured destinations either at sixth form, college or on an apprenticeship. 4 students were NEET and we are still working with them to try and secure a destination.

Data usage

Data is used within the academy to identify areas for improvement at student, teacher, subject, department and whole academy levels. Academic achievement is closely monitored throughout the year, and the achievement support team maintains a detailed tracker of Special Educational Needs. Investment is made in data management systems which improve these processes, as well as working towards reducing the administrative burden on teachers and improving efficiencies for administrators. This year, the academy has migrated to a new MIS which allows easier and broader access to information for teaching staff. Training provision has helped to ensure as smooth a transition as possible

Broadening skills

The Skills, Action Service curriculum is part of our core provision for Year 7 & 8 within the Academy. We dedicate two hours every Wednesday afternoon to a variety of courses which are designed to ensure that students develop a skill of their choice and plan to put it into action, using it to serve a local, national or even international community.

Outdoor Education forms an integral part of our wider curriculum. It offers students the opportunity to utilise our "Base Camp" facility, to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh programme and gives every student the chance to go on a residential visit to Italy during year 10. The Combined Cadet Force is expanding in partnership with another local school.

Summer School is run for two weeks each summer to aid the transition of students from primary school. They receive specialist teaching in core subjects and take part in enrichment activities including an overnight camp.

Our Foundation Programme is designed around students who join the academy below the level expected at their age, or for those who need extra pastoral support. Students work in smaller groups to prepare them to join the mainstream curriculum.

Catering for Students

Deprivation is a significant barrier for many students in the academy and therefore has to be addressed carefully by the academy. A particular area is the need to provide nutritional meals. This year the academy has continued to see strong growth in the take up of school meals provided by our in house catering teams. In collaboration with TGAT's Executive catering officer, the academy has developed highly attractive eating areas and the provision of exciting, innovative and nutritious meals. The response has been extremely positive from both students and staff alike with the academy achieving a take up of over 80%.

The academy has a very strong working relationship with all catering suppliers both locally and nationally in which very clear expectations as to required standards are established. Each term every supplier is invited in to each school and we review pricing to ensure we are getting best value, quality and resolution to issues. This has enabled us to negotiate savings of 5.75% across the board compared to last year. This in turn has allowed us to hold prices to our students at 2013 prices. This strong relationship also enables us to compare our pricing structure against that which is applied to external contract catering firms and shows that in some cases we are able to make savings of up to 40% compared to External Catering.

This saving described has enabled the academy to use better quality ingredients for meals, benefitting students nutritionally as well as helping to encourage pupils to try different meal options. In addition this policy motivates the staff as they are proud in what they provide for their students and in return the staff receive many compliments which then promotes good staff

retention. FSM students report that they find the food offer helps them to concentrate better and are always among the first to suggest new ideas for menu cycles or new concepts.

Moving forward the academy aims to implement a catering software system to allow areas to be identified in which we can make further savings and efficiencies by isolating food margins per serving; this will also allow better information for our parents regards meals nutritional and allergen details.

Robust governance and oversight of Academy finances

The academy's Governors are committed to ensuring that governance of the Academy's financial management is robust. The Governors received updates on financial performance at regular meetings during the year raising questions as to the effectiveness of central purchasing over insurance, IT and effectiveness of food purchasing.

The Governors are cognisant of their responsibilities in ensuring that the Academy's resources are managed effectively, to support the objectives of the Academy: an example of this is in the key question raised by the Chair of the Governors whenever larger transactions are reviewed: "How have we achieved value for money?" The debate will then be around the process underpinning the supplier choice, the pricing decision, the options reviewed and the lessons learned where appropriate.

Policies and Procedures adopted for the Induction and Training of Directors and Governors

Training and induction procedures are offered to each new local governor, the extent of which is dependent upon their existing experience but would always include a tour of the Academy and a chance to meet staff and pupils. All Governors are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role as Governors. As there are normally only two or three new Governors a year, induction tends to be done informally and is tailored specifically to the individual. Advantage is taken of specific courses offered by the Local Authority and other bodies.

Ensuring that the Trust gains good value for money, and effective and efficient use of resources

Prudent approach

The Academy takes a prudent approach to expenditure. A significant proportion of the Academy's budget is spent on staffing, the staffing structure is reviewed annually to ensure that it is fit for purpose and can adapt and respond to support the successful attainment of the objectives within the Academy.

Benchmarks

The Academy regularly benchmarks financial performance against other academy trusts to demonstrate that the Academy provides value for money. Tender exercises are regularly undertaken to ensure that high value contracts are assessed against the marketplace on a regular basis to help ensure terms achieved are competitive.

Collaborative purchasing

During the year to 31 August the academy worked in strong collaboration with Tudor Grange Academies Trust to achieve efficient pricing. Some examples of cost savings during the year compared with the buying as a single academy trust:

- Insurance is purchased through an established academy buying group which it is estimated saved around 25% compared with buying as a single academy trust;
- IT infrastructure and telephony services were purchased through established supplier partners with estimated savings of 10% in the year. All partners are on the academy's web-site www.worcs.tgacademy.org.uk. A key factor in allowing a supplier to become a partner is their ability to offer value for money
- Audit and Legal are purchased centrally saving in excess of 20%

Maximising income generation

The Academy has a Lettings policy in place and explores opportunities to generate income through the hire of the site. A proactive approach is taken towards preparing funding bids and generating revenue streams in order to maximise income generation: in the year for example grants of £5,500 helped to purchase sports equipment. Other income grew in the year by 48% compared with the previous year which is testament to the effort invested here.

Reviewing controls and managing risks

The Governing Body has reviewed the key risks to which the academy is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Governing Body is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy's significant risks that has been in place for the year ending 31 August 2013 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Governing Body.

The Academy's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular, it includes:

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body;
- regular reviews by the Governors of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- setting targets to measure financial performance such as staff to income ratios; spend by departments; spend on administration etc;
- formal delegation of authority to sign off transactions and segregation of duties to manage the integrity of transactions;

Case study – health & Safety

At the start of the year the academy and Trust were aware there was limited infrastructure in place to easily review compliance within academies with health and safety legislation. The need was to efficiently and effectively prompt, document and evidence performance in this area. Solutions were tendered for.

The academy now has cloud-based dashboard system which enables leadership to effectively take quick and informed action based on analysis of live data inputted and measured by the system; to analyse accidents and incidents of all kinds and take steps to reduce them and limit potential damage; and to deliver policy requirements such as training and risk assessments and keep an audit trail of such. Significant savings arise as the academy does not require the same degree of help and advice from a number of specialist consultants.

Lessons Learned

In future it might be appropriate to consider tendering for an increasing number of services and contracts whilst recognising the need to balance appropriately service continuity with economy. All decisions regarding purchasing and service provision will be taken with an emphasis on obtaining value for money and improving outcomes for pupils.

Claire Maclean

Trust Accounting Officer

19 December 2014