

Value for Money Statement
Academy trust name: Gawthorpe Community Academy Trust
Academy trust company number: 07805262

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Gawthorpe Community 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 Results

Priority one of the school development plan was to ensure that three new teachers and one new support staff member was successfully inducted in order to ensure that outstanding rates of progress in each year group were maintained.

Triangulation of data demonstrated that the clear programme of support which was put into place and was frequently reviewed ensured that all new staff members were delivered consistently good and outstanding lessons. Senior Leadership judgement about the quality of these staff was confirmed in an external review in March 2014 which stated "Mentoring support and coaching from the consistently outstanding teachers already evident in Academy is paying dividends. The quality of teaching over time is now more typically outstanding and never less than good through the Academy.... High-quality teaching and support of teaching assistants enables the pupils they support to make accelerated progress.

Priority two of the school development plan was to close the identified gender gap in each year group.

Tracking demonstrated that the gaps between boys and girls in all year groups closed.

Gap Closure between Boys and Girls:

Year 1 – Reading 1.0, Writing 0.4, Maths 0.9
Year 2 – Reading 1.3, Writing 0.1, Maths 0.4
Year 3 – Reading 0.0, Writing 0.7, Maths 0.0
Year 4 – Reading 0.4, Writing 0.9, Maths 0.3
Year 5 – Reading 1.6, Writing 0.9, Maths -0.1
Year 6 – Reading 1.0, Writing -0.09, Maths -0.6

Priority three of the development plan was to promote outstanding behaviour. As a consequence of the implementation of a clear action plan the impact on improvement in behaviour has been significant and the external report stated "The behaviour of pupils is excellent as a result of carefully targeted support which allows them to develop their skills in getting along together and resolving any potential problems well before they have chance to take hold."

The appointment of an additional Learning Mentor had a very positive response in managing behaviour. Although a small cohort of children still present challenges this is reducing as a consequence of the additional support. Additionally small nurture groups are taking place on a more regular basis this ensures support for those children with identified need. The external report stated “The work of the two learning mentors and effective class teaching ensures that low level disruption has been eradicated.....The few remaining pupils who present with more challenging behaviour are well managed so that the school is fully inclusive of all pupils no matter what their needs or challenges.”

Data demonstrates a reduction in reflection times, internal and external exclusions. The impact of the actions taken has been clearly visible across the academy. The external report stated “Pupils now consistently display a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning, including in independent, group and whole class work, which has a very strong impact on their progress in lessons. The reported concluded “Pupils’ behaviour outside lessons is almost always impeccable. Pupils’ pride in the academy is shown by their excellent conduct, manners and punctuality.....pupil’s behaviour is excellent.”

Attainment outcomes

Percentage of good level of development 63%

Percentage of children achieving level 2+ at the end of Key Stage 1:

Reading 93%

Writing 90%

Maths 100%

Percentage of children achieving level 4+ at the end of Key Stage 2:

Reading 97%

Writing 97%

Maths 97%

Financial Governance and Oversight

The Governing Body has responsibility and accountability for ensuring economy, efficiency and effective financial management and compliance with statutory obligations. To assist the decision making process the Governing Body established a Resources Committee to enable more detailed consideration to be given to the best means of fulfilling the Governing Body's responsibility and to ensure sound management of the academy's finances and resources, including proper planning, monitoring and probity.

The Resources Committee meet at least once every half term and undertakes a strategic role in the financial management of the academy working to established, clear Terms of Reference.

During November 2013 a new governor was appointed, and was co-opted to the Resources Committee. With formal accountancy qualifications the new governor is ideally placed to review the financial resources which regularly form part of the committees remit. Scrutinising budget, accounts and other financial information.

Purchasing

Clear procedures relating to procurement have been adopted and are now well embedded in the academy.

Major contracts and service level agreements are appraised and reviewed on an annual basis with an options appraisal prepared for governors' consideration. Existing contracts have been renegotiated to achieve even better value for money, for example, Staff Absence Insurance was reviewed, three quotations were received and savings of £2161 were made by switching supplier. Costs are always questioned, after receiving a quotation from a competitor one contract which had not reached its term was renegotiated saving just under £200 per year

Income Generation

The majority of the Academy's income is obtained from the Education Funding Agency in the form of the General Annual Grant (GAG). The Academy also receives other central government grants such as the Pupil Premium. Early Years funding is received directly from Wakefield Council. The Academy has also receives unrestricted funds generated from the following activities:

- Consultancy support services delivered through the National Support School and the Aspire Teaching School;
- Income from hire of the facilities;
- A management fee relating to the Maypole Children's Centre (until April 2014);
- Income related to the wrap around childcare service.

Reviewing Controls

The main financial performance indicator in reporting to the Board of Trustees has been:

- Budget working document;
- Income and expenditure reports monitoring cumulative income against cumulative expenditure for key budget headings / items (for example salaries, building costs, maintenance)
- Budget holder reports;
- Statutory Budget returns to the EFA.

Alongside this the bank account is monitored for cash flow purposes on a weekly basis.

Review of Effectiveness

A system of internal control has been in place in Gawthorpe Community Academy Trust for the period 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014. As Accounting Officer the Principal has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. During the year in question the review has been informed by:

- The work of the Responsible Officer;
- The work of the external auditor;
- The work of the Business Manager within the Academy Trust who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

Managing Financial Risks

The Academy Trust'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 Board of Trustees;
- Regular reviews by the Resources Committee of Income and expenditure reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- Clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines;
- Monthly review of budget holder reports;
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- Identification and management of risks.

Financial risks are assessed annually and control measures implemented, the details are set out in a separate Risk Register for governors' consideration.

The Board of Trustees have appointed a Trustee as Responsible Officer. During visits in the period 1st September 2013 to 31st August 2014 the Responsible Officer carried out salary checks, tested procurement & purchasing, made sure income was accounted for, processes and procedure were reviewed and checked bank reconciliations. The Responsible Officer visits have not identified any material control issues and the Trustees are satisfied with the in-depth financial testing undertaken by the Responsible Officer.

A new Business Manager was appointed to the academy in June 2014, the new Business Manager is experienced in Financial and payroll management, has worked in other schools and academies for the past eight years and holds a CIMA advance Diploma in Management Accountancy. The academy believes this appointment has improve the financial reporting standards of the academy and will continue to do so in the future and that the level of qualification held by the manager will ensure financial propriety, as reinforced by the CIMA code of conduct.

General Risk Management

The Trustees have adopted a strategic approach to risk management and are in the process of assessing the major risks to which the Academy Trust is exposed, in particular those relating to teaching, provision of facilities, health and safety and other operational areas of the Academy. Systems, policies, procedures and training will be further developed alongside control measures to manage those risks.

Signed:



Name: S J Vickerman

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: