

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: Harrogate High School Academy Trust

Company number: 8074099

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Harrogate High School 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:

The trust has kept its staffing structure under review and used a curriculum-led financial planning model to ensure staff are deployed efficiently to support the curriculum and to support each individual student's progress and achievement.

The trust has managed the differing needs of students by operating a personalised approach to learning. It has run a large number of initiatives, funded from the GAG and Pupil Premium grants which supplement the curriculum, such as:

- After school English and Maths lessons
- Lexia phonics programme
- Reading intervention
- Targeted deployment of Teaching Assistants
- Learning Zone provision for students needing additional support away from the classroom
- Breakfast, Lunch and Break Clubs and Independent Learning Club
- Accelerated Reader program
- Learning Managers for each year group to oversee and manage students' progress and provide pastoral care
- Attendance Team
- SEAL group
- Year 6 Transition Programme
- Year 6 Literacy and Numeracy Programme
- Art Club
- Mentoring
- Dyslexia screening
- EAL Support
- A dedicated careers advisor employed by the trust
- Trips to external learning venues for off-timetable learning days

Collaboration:

The trust has engaged with other educational providers and experts to share delivery and good practice. During the period, it has worked on developing a stronger partnership under the umbrella agreement with Skipton Girls' High School and investigating the benefits of transforming the umbrella trust into a multi-academy trust. The academy trust's strategic partnership with the Northern Lights Teaching Schools Alliance has continued to flourish as Harrogate High School has supported other schools with its Specialist Leader in Education teachers and been involved in the joint delivery of high quality teacher training, leadership development and research and development.

Quantifying improvements:

The school is currently rated by Ofsted 'good' with 'outstanding' leadership and management. Attainment and attendance continue to improve.

In terms of the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their peers, this has been narrowed by 22% in English and 14% in Maths since 2012. In 2014 71% of disadvantaged pupils achieved expected progress in English compared with 71% of other pupils and 63% of disadvantaged pupils achieved expected progress in Maths compared with 73% of other pupils. Year 11 results when compared with the same measure for 2013 showed an increase in A*-C English and maths of 6% and an increase in numbers achieving EBacc of 8%. Sixth Form results showed A*-A pass rate at A2 (A-level) of 49% (23% above national average); A2 (A-level) grades at A*-B at 57% (5% above national average) and A2 (A-level) grades at A*-E 98% (same as national average). Attendance was 95.3%, an improvement of 1.2% on last year and persistent absence was 4.1%, an improvement of 1.33%.

Financial governance and oversight:

The trust's system of financial governance includes strong oversight by the trustees and accounting officer together with professional external oversight. The trust has contracted Veritau Ltd. to provide an internal audit and responsible officer service and Colman Whittaker and Roscow to provide accountancy and external audit services. An effective control environment is in operation and the latest internal audit opinion of the controls within the academy was that they provided 'substantial assurance'. An external audit carried out at the end of the period to 31st August 2014 found that there were no qualitative issues with the accounting and financial policies, procedures and systems and identified only low risk/low priority weaknesses which have been rectified. The Finance and Personnel Committee has received budget forecasts and budget monitoring reports from the Finance Director together with reports presented to the committee by the internal and external auditors and accountants. The Governing Body is well aware of its responsibilities and works to its own finance and governance manual that reflects DfE guidance and covers the responsibilities of trustees and employees.

Better purchasing and income generation:

The trust has a purchasing policy that contains procedures which aim to ensure that value for money is achieved. All contracts are reviewed prior to renewal and contracts over £5,000 are subject to competitive procedures. Last year the trust renegotiated the cleaning contract with NYCC which means that costs for this year are substantially reduced. Economies of scale have been achieved by using framework agreements such as the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation. The trust has invested a lot of time in marketing the school as a good school with excellent facilities to both potential parents and community users. The aim has been to increase school admissions and community bookings and therefore improve income generation. This appears to have taken effect as community income has increased and parental first choices have also increased. The school is looking forward to a complete rebuild starting in 2015 and has taken that opportunity and used it as a marketing tool. Additional income has been gained by students from Outwood Academy Ripon attending courses at Harrogate High School and the Specialist Leader in Education work undertaken in other schools.

Reviewing controls and managing risks:

Because of the reducing rolls and therefore budget pressures, the trust has involved staff and students through assemblies and briefings in maximizing economic efficiencies. The Senior Leadership Team receives monthly reports on finances and is well aware of the financial costs of the day-to-day operations of the school and any additional initiatives or expenditure. A curriculum-led financial plan ensures that teaching load is fit for purpose with the minimum waste. The trust has agreed an investment policy to ensure cash reserves are managed effectively and the risk register has been reviewed and risks identified and managed.

Lessons learned:

The financial systems and controls have been further refined throughout this period (the trust's second accounting period) and are now working well. Income generation is increasing, but there are still financial pressures caused by pupil-led funding when the school has a falling roll and is hugely under capacity. This means that in this period and in the next two accounting periods while the new, smaller building is built, finances will be very tight. Governors, staff and students are all well aware of this and are all supporting the school in contributing to efficiencies.

Name: Mr Andrew Bayston
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 16 Dec 2014