

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: Hobart High School (Academy Trust) Limited

Company number: 8347874

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Hobart High School (Academy Trust) Limited 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

The attainment of the school remains above national averages. Our 2014 cohort scored 59% 5A*-C including English and Maths. Indeed on measures relating to progress our Value Added score was 1009 (a rise of 14 points from 2013). The detail of results show that in particular middle ability students make significantly better than expected progress at Hobart than they might at other schools. Performance in Maths is a particular strength (against national trends) but we still have a clear area of focus in English. Progress has been supported through the better use of planned, targeted interventions and areas of out of hours learning.

We have rationalised areas of the staffing structure in the last year. We have broken our humanities team into separate History, Geography and RE teams to increase efficiency. We have reduced the size of the Senior Leadership Team and introduced secondments for staff to help their career progression and skills development.

We have introduced BTEC Travel and Tourism to the school as a way of engaging middle ability learners who want a more vocational option. This has proved to be a popular option in its first year.

Our SEND provision continues to improve and now offers a comprehensive suite of planned interventions to support emerging needs as the year progresses. This has included work with our local primary schools.

We have appointed an Able, Gifted and Talented Coordinator who is ensuring that the most able receive quality first teaching alongside appropriate enrichment activities.

Deployment of Teaching Assistants has allowed us to offer appropriate exam access to support a very high number of students. This is well evidenced by the strong results from SEND students this summer.

We have focused a lot of our work on supporting primary schools within our area. This has involved sharing training relating to SEND and behaviour, coordinating Modern Foreign Languages activities and sharing expertise in both English and Maths.

We have been actively involved in providing support to a local high school that is currently judged inadequate. This has involved hosting visits from staff, sharing skills in ICT and data tracking and providing in school support for a failing department.

Whilst delivering a balanced budget we were able to direct resources to support educational progress in the school. Student to teacher ratio has reduced from 16.9:1 for 2012/13 to 15.9: 1 for 2013/14 with the percentage of income spent on staffing reducing from 77.6% in 2012/13 to 74.3% in 2013/14.

In addition to work on exam performance we have invested heavily in behaviour support. We have opened an Internal Exclusion Unit as an alternative to use of fixed term exclusion. This has had a huge impact on the behaviour of students in the school. We have seen a dramatic fall in numbers of fixed term exclusions and a similar drop in the

number of repeat offenders.

Our attendance figures show an improvement from the previous year but are still a key area for improvement.

A recent external assessment of the school (not Ofsted) suggested that the school was a very strong "Good" with elements of both Leadership and Behaviour that could be seen as "Outstanding".

Financial Governance and Oversight

The school framework for financial governance and control is well established and comprehensive. Key features are:

- Detailed budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget, termly revisions to the budget and half termly financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the governing body, having been considered first by the finance and resources committee (governors).
- Monthly financial reports considered in detail by the accounting officer and principal financial officer. These are then circulated to finance and resources committee governors in months that the committee does not meet and are also considered by the school senior leadership team.
- Half termly reviews by the finance and resources committee of reports which indicate financial performance against budget, proposals for major purchases, capital works or revenue expenditure
- Finance and resources committee minutes reported to each full governing body meeting
- Clearly defined purchasing regulations and procedures.
- A scheme of delegation of authority and segregation of duties.
- Identification and management of risks with an annual review of the risks register.
- Internal audit provided through a professional accountancy company with three day long visits per year. A written report is produced and considered by the finance and resources committee, chaired by a governor with audit responsibility.

The finance and resources committee examine variation between actual and budgeted expenditure and income at each meeting both to ensure timely corrective action on overspends and identify where spare resources can be used to better effect. During the period funds were identified to: purchase on line revision resources for Key Stage 4 students; extend the use of Go 4schools software to manage attendance and behaviour tracking; improve facilities in the food technology rooms; and fund the change of school uniform from sweatshirts to blazers without parental contribution.

Each internal audit visit report has been considered by the finance and resources committee and where necessary changes to procedures and controls have been implemented. The Academy external auditors report on the 2013/14 financial statements gave an unqualified opinion that they had been properly prepared and represent a true and fair view of our financial affairs. The annual report and financial statements are available on our website.

The school has identified the examination of benchmarking data from other similar schools as a priority for the 2014/15 financial year to show potential areas for financial efficiencies.

Better Purchasing

The finance policy adopted by the governing body sets out the purchasing regulations for the school and ensures that competitive prices are obtained for goods and services. The scheme of delegation for spending decisions ensures that all purchases above £2,000 are exposed to competitive quotation or tender and all spending decisions of £15,000 or above are made by the finance and resources committee or full governing body. There is a clear focus on achieving the optimum balance between quality, service and cost in all spending decisions.

During the year the school has moved to a managed print service for all printing and photocopying equipment through a three year operating lease awarded following a formal tender process. This has resulted in improved efficiency and a significant reduction in per copy cost of printing and photocopying. The entire fire alarm system has been replaced at a cost of approaching £80,000 with the project supervised by a qualified Building Surveyor to ensure positive cost management. The scheme attracted a 100% grant from the Education Funding Agency.

A review of the role of the Business Manager has led to the creation of the post of Facilities Manager to take a more commercial approach to the management of the premises and facilities. This will ensure the most cost

effective delivery of all premises maintenance and related services. The appointment will also release time for the Business Manager to focus more time on human resources management, marketing and income generation.

A comprehensive review of the support services purchased from Norfolk County Council and other suppliers was conducted with cost reductions approaching £30,000 freed up for use on key educational priorities during the 2014/15 financial year.

Better Income Generation

The school facilities are well used by the by the local community and a dedicated member of staff is employed to supervise all such use. The governing body objective is for facility charges to recover the full economic cost of the making the facilities available outside school time and this objective is currently being met. The catering service for the school provided through a specialist external contractor continues to trade successfully and forms an important part of the school service provision for students and staff. The school continues to provide ICT support to six cluster primary schools on a fee paying basis. This provides a good quality, responsive service to local schools and professional development opportunities for the ICT technical staff of the school.

Reviewing Controls and Managing Risks

A detailed risk register has been compiled and was considered in detail by the finance and resources committee in January 2014 and reviews will continue on an annual basis. All major risks are assessed and plans made to manage, minimise and mitigate risks. The school conducted a thorough tender exercise to procure appropriate insurance cover and a long term agreement at a fixed price was signed for three years in February 2014. As part of the insurance provision the school retains the services of an insurance broker with significant education experience to provide advice on risk and insurance matters. At a management level, financial risks are well managed through implementation of agreed procedures, including clear separation of duties and the regular management, monitoring and review of financial performance against budgets. The school retains human resources, legal and accountancy professionals to ensure that appropriate professional advice is available when required.

Name: Mr Samuel Griffin
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 19 Dec 2014