



Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: Hilbre High School Humanities College.

Academy trust company number: 08075363.

Year ended 31 August 2014.

I accept that as accounting officer of **Hilbre High School Humanities College** 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 resource has provided good value for money during the academic year.

Improving educational outcomes:

We have ensured that resources are directed where they are most needed and effective in meeting educational requirements, for example by:

- Ensuring that there is a robust link between School Improvement Planning and expenditure with resources being identified and targeted to the framework of the plan and its outcomes.
- Monitoring that pupil premium funding is effectively and appropriately deployed and the progress of students benefiting from related interventions is tracked. As part of pupil premium monitoring, subject areas have been required to set out plans for improving the performance of vulnerable groups which has facilitated a much more targeted approach.
- In Year 11, 55% of all students made 3 levels of progress in English. 52% of Pupil Premium students made 3 levels of progress in English. The progress made by Pupil Premium students taking GCSE English Language is just below that of the entire year group.

- Defined tracking systems to record pupil attainment and progress to ensure that interventions and support are targeted to achieve value for money.
- Ensuring that student attendance is closely monitored and managed, with support and early intervention to ensure that all students maximise their time at school. Part the school's comprehensive rewards scheme is used to encourage excellent attendance for individuals, forms, and year groups. For this academic year attendance was 95.2% for pre16 students, which is above the national average.
- Offering a diverse curriculum that meets students' needs, thus ensuring that all students have the opportunity to make good progress and achieve well. In conjunction with this, staffing structures are regularly reviewed, to ensure that the needs of the school are met.
- Providing a programme of lesson observations and work scrutinies, combined with bespoke staff development to ensure pupil progress, with relevant action being taken to address the underperformance of individual staff who fall below set performance targets.
- Provision of revision sessions during Easter break for all students sitting exams in the following months.

Financial Governance and Oversight:

Our governance arrangements include regular monitoring by the Governing Body and its committees, including the Academy Finance and Business Committee and Audit Committee. These committees receive regular detailed reports, including financial monitoring and performance, and ask relevant questions as recorded in the minutes.

The work of these committees is further informed by regular Responsible Officer reports from BDO LLP (Chartered Accountants). The Governing Body ensures that any recommendations are acted upon to continually improve our provision.

As part of the school's governance, we have conducted a Governors' skills audit; this has enabled us to ensure that Governors from a financial background sit on our Audit and Academy, Business and Finance Committees, to act as critical friends.

School policies are subject to regular reviews and revised/amendment in accordance with government legislation and the needs and demands of the school at any given time.

Improved Purchasing:

All avenues are considered when making purchases or entering into Service Level Agreements (SLA). SLAs are reviewed and alternatives sought to ensure that we obtain best value.

Stringent financial controls are communicated to staff to ensure they are aware of the financial constraints governing the school as an academy. Budget holders are held accountable for how they operate their budget, and are assisted by the Finance Team in sourcing best value.

Examples of steps taken to ensure value for money when purchasing include:

- Viewing alternative purchasing options on-line in order to find the most competitive price, e.g. on Bay, we can purchase a replacement laptop screen for between £37-£50, compared to mainline suppliers and the Local Authority, who will charge anywhere between £100 - £150. Also, high speed 305m CAT6e cable boxed LAN networking cord, purchased from eBay costs £30, compared against buying direct from Misco at £140.
- Developing business relationships with companies and negotiating discounts, e.g. Apple, who will price match any other quote and offer other incentives.
- Collaborating with other schools in order to start negotiating group purchases in order to benefit from economies of scale.
- Having a school's financial procedures manual which clearly states all policies and procedures which have to be adhered to, including purchasing. The manual is reviewed and revised annually, and ratified by the Governing Body.
- Considering whether the purchase is necessary.

Improved Income Generation:

The school explores every opportunity to generate income through bidding for additional funding streams, seeking sponsorship and realising commercial value from our progressive educational approach.

Examples taken to maximise income include:

- Income generation from hiring the school premises.
- Regular reviews of any surplus funds to ensure that they are invested safely in high interest, low risk accounts/bonds thus maximising potential of these funds.
- Outsourcing of professional services as an additional income source.
- Sale of 'beyond reasonable repair' assets or assets due for disposal.
- Successful grant applications.

Reviewing Controls and Managing Risks:

The Principal and Assistant Vice Principal - Academy Finance and Business, regularly review budget monitoring reports, considering expenditure against each budget cost centre and address any significant variances against the original budget. This is also

reviewed by the Leadership Team. All budget holders receive a monthly statement to enable close monitoring of individual budgets.

Regular budget monitoring reports have been presented and reviewed by the Academy Finance and Business Committee and Audit Committee, as well as by all budget holders, in order to ensure that spending is contained within predefined budget settings.

The school's appointed accountants BDO LLP, also act as the school's external auditor, carrying out audit inspections/system checks during the year, reporting on specific areas, e.g. Payroll, Banking, Purchasing and Schemes of Delegation. The outcomes from each inspection are reported back to the Governing Body by the Chair of the Audit Committee.

Actions taken to reduce risk include the purchase of an appropriate level of insurance cover, following consultation with the school's broker. Professional advice and support (e.g. HR/Legal) has also been sought, with bespoke contracts purchased, including Governor liability cover.

The school has a Service Level Agreement with the Local Authority for Health and Safety advice and support.

The school also has a comprehensive Risk Register, which is reviewed and updated on a yearly basis, and approved by the Governing Body.

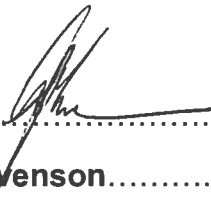
Lessons Learned:

This Academy is in its second year of operation; as such it is clearly evident that we operate within an environment of continual change and are responsive to national directives and policy changes and also to local demands from our wider community. As such. We acknowledge that there will always be valuable lessons to be learned and a constant need to review our procedures and systems to ensure that value for money is at the heart of everything we do to enhance the learning opportunities for our students.

The Senior Leadership Team and the Governors are not complacent and recognise that there is always room for improvement and innovation, and that the effective application of resources to best support the various educational needs of all the students is paramount.

Governors and our accountants/auditors continually challenge school leaders about the financial decisions made, and the allocation of resources, to ensure that they understand the rationale behind these decisions.

This statement refers to many examples of what we consider to be good practice to help us secure value for money at every opportunity. This in turn supports the work towards our School Improvement Plan which sets out clearly our specific objectives and the future direction of the academy.

Signed: 

Name: Jan Leyenson.....

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 8th December 2014.....