

# Value for Money Statement

**Academy trust name: Christopher Whitehead Language College.**

**Academy trust company number:07634426**

.....

**Year ended 31 August 2013.**

I accept that as accounting officer of Christopher Whitehead Language 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 its resources has provided good value for money during the academic year.

## **Improving educational results:**

The school has been an academy since June 2011. Student numbers have remained steady at 1099. The Academy was rated as Good by Ofsted in May 2013. Attainment on entry is just below the national average but the average grade with which a student leaves the school is a C+ and the academy compares favourably with similar schools in England and Wales.

The academy is rated as producing significantly positive results in the EBACC subjects - above the national average - with extremely strong performance in Mathematics, Science and History. Other areas of particular strength are seen in the high performance of RE, Textiles and ICT. English was affected by the national hard grading and MFL has a 100% entry policy as we are a language college which has affected their results in comparison with the national figures.

**Targeted improvement:** Staffing structure is deployed to drive and support school improvement and our wide curriculum, summarised in our school development plan This focuses on; sharing best practice, all members of our community taking responsibility for their actions, and rigorous implementation of the school's policies and procedures for managing behaviour, marking, feedback and differentiation in class.

The aim is to improve progress in English and MFL at KS4 rapidly so that standards are in line with predictions by summer. English and Maths are targeted with additional teaching capacity to provide intervention work for students not achieving expected

progress. Behaviour and attendance are strengths and were rated outstanding in the last two Ofsted inspections.

**Focus on individual pupils: How has the trust managed the differing needs of pupils, such as those requiring one to one support, and those requiring more stretch?**

- Specialist dyslexia teacher employed
- Specialist behaviour support managers
- Rapid Reader Programme delivered by a specialist primary teacher to catch up low reading ages
- Accelerated Reader programme to motivate improving readers in years 7-10.
- Year 7, 8 and 9 Catch up intervention in English and Maths, delivered by LSAs and specialist teachers.
- Intervention for KS4 students not achieving expected levels of progress in English and Maths
  
- Funding to support vocational lessons for 60 students a year which aids their understanding of core subjects, prepares them for the world of work and improves behaviour.
  
- **Collaboration:** The trust has engaged with other educational providers and experts to share delivery or good practice, and to drive up standards for the least cost. This includes being part of a teaching schools alliance with two local outstanding schools.
- Gifted and talented students are provided with a full range of opportunities to ensure they maximise the full range of HE and work related experiences available to them.

**Pupil Premium** The academy tracks the progress of all students robustly and applies intervention strategies to ensure we minimise underperformance, particularly within the percentage of students entitled to benefit from the Pupil Premium, in current Year 11 it is %.

Creating a study plus group, equal to one option block in Years 10 and 11 to receive more Maths and English for EAL students.

- Withdrawal from certain subjects, MFL and Humanities in Years 7, 8 and 9 to focus on additional literacy and numeracy work.
- Additional support for students doing controlled assessments.
- Appointment of a behaviour support assistant to work alongside the small proportion of disengaged students.

- One-to-one mentoring tutors, allowed additional 100 minutes over two weeks for this per tutor, (Sutton Trust believe best form of support to students is through effective feedback.)
- Peer mentoring programme.
- Purchase equipment and additional resources for individual students.
- Educational visits.

r.

### **Financial Governance and Oversight.**

As accounting officer I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. During the year the review has been informed by:

- The work of the Responsible Officer, Chris Marsh, who carries out termly reviews.
- The work of the external auditor, Bishop Fleming Rabjohns.
- The work of the Managers within the academy trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

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

- Comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and regular financial reviews.
- Termly reviews by the finance committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and details of expenditure programmes and proposed capital works.
- Monthly financial and management reports covering all departmental expenditure and revenue budgets.
- Clearly defined purchasing guidelines.
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties.
- Identification and management of risks.

### **Better purchasing:**

All contracts, including Service Level Agreements (SLA), are subject to annual review, retender or renegotiation to ensure the school maintains the appropriate level of effectiveness against value for money. Where necessary and possible, longer term contracts (three years) are agreed to allow tariffs or service charges to be set for the full period of the contract and this has a financial benefit to the school. The school intends to extend the operational abilities of supporting staff; particularly Caretakers and Technicians, through accredited training and this will result in the reduction or termination of external contractor support to the school for a number of mandatory maintenance inspections and housekeeping needs. Where possible a number of contracts are being

considered to be taken in house in the expectation that this will achieve better savings and financial control. The school intends to enter into closer partnership with other schools who are members of the Worcester Academy and School Business Managers (WASBM) Forum to obtain better pricing with local companies and work is currently ongoing to achieve this. Operating leases for periods longer than three years are not authorised and all leases awarded are with companies who are members of the Government Procurement Scheme (GPS) or the Crescent Purchasing Consortium.

### **Benchmarking:**

As outlined above, the school does use its membership of the WASBM to confirm pricing and does benchmark its costs against similar academies locally and regionally. Any contract setting, renegotiation or retender is discussed and agreed at the school finance committee and this process has resulted in finding savings and areas where other potential savings could be achieved. With the exception of teaching costs and exam costs, which are nationally set, the school has continued to identify and make annual savings in its operational costs.

### **Options appraisal:**

The Governors and Senior Leadership Team apply the principles of best value when making decisions about:

- Allocating resources effectively to promote the aims of the school while achieving value for money.
- Where necessary, targeting resources to improve standards and quality of the service or teaching provision.
- Using set and innovative resources to support the various educational needs of all pupils.
- Developing procedures for assessing need, and obtaining goods and services which provide “best value” in terms of suitability, efficiency, time, and cost. Measures in place include:
  - A competitive tendering procedure that is agreed and countersigned by the Chair of Governors
  - A procedure for authorising and explaining any “best value” quotes, which are accepted but may not necessarily be the cheapest and are chosen for other operational reasons (e.g. suitability for purpose and quality of workmanship)
  - Procedures which minimise administrative input or checking by allowing the purchase of goods or services under £1000 direct from known, reliable suppliers (e.g. stationery, small equipment).

### **Economies of scale:**

The school aims to work in collaboration with other schools or academies to reduce procurement costs. An area for further expansion will be our ability to offer a reduction in administrative costs to local primary schools thereby achieving greater economies of scale for all concerned. The school regularly shares and receives procurement best practice via the WASBM forum.

### **Better income generation:**

Opportunities to increase additional revenue streams are continually explored. Current options include the letting out of school facilities, the provision of Newly Qualified Teacher training and a licence and profit share scheme with our in house caterer. Other options being looked at are the provision of vocational training (Hair and Beauty), the use of our larger reprographic facilities by local primary schools, clubs and community groups, the use of sports fields by community clubs.

### **Reviewing controls and managing risks:**

The school has appointed a Governor to chair the Finance Committee and is responsible for working closely with the Reporting Officer (RO) and our externally appointed accountancy firm (Rabjohns) in the compilation and preparing of all audit reports to the Governing Body. The RO periodically checks that:

- Agreed finance procedures are being carried out.
- Any financial risks to the school are identified and a strategy to manage or cancel them is proposed to Governors
- Any previously identified risks that cannot be cancelled are monitored and/or reduced.

The school purchases financial advice and training from its external auditors.

Budget holders, management and governors receive regular budget reports which are scrutinised to ensure the most effective use of resources to meet the objectives of the Academy.

The school has taken financial advice from its auditors and its banking partner (Lloyds Bank) in achieving the highest interest possible on surplus balances which are managed by the school finance officer. A breakdown of surplus balances and suggestions on how to maximise any returns on those held in interest earning accounts is reported to the governing body at regular intervals and always before the funds in any account needs to be moved.

Insurance levels are reviewed annually and used to cost-effectively manage risks. As a result of a recent review a level of duplication in the engineering inspections that has been carried out by insurers and local companies as part of the Property SLA has been identified. It is the intention of the school to remove any duplication of inspection in the expectation of a reduction in costs to the school.

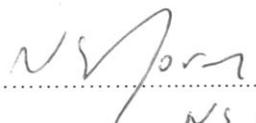
Governors review the reserve levels of the Academy annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. Governors determine an appropriate level of free reserves that should be maintained based upon known or expected commitments. The appropriate level should provide sufficient working capital to cover possible delays between the receipt of grants and expenditure and to funds to deal with planned capital projects, emergencies such as urgent maintenance and any provision necessary if there are unexpected fluctuations in student numbers outside the control of the school.

### **Lessons learned:**

The school annually reviews its financial and operational areas as required by the medium to long term strategies of the Governing body and Senior Leadership Team.

This is done with the expectation of ensuring that savings are made and returned for use to the core business of the school namely the education of its students. Lessons learnt have included:

- The need and ability to use data to target resources and provide measured evaluations to ensure funds are spent at the right time and for the right effect.
- To ensure that any report generated is understood by those who must make decisions based upon it.
- To ensure financial reports are informative, timely and have the right detail. This is paramount when requiring budget holders, Governors and senior Leadership Team members' to make decisions that could have serious implications on the delivery of education now and in the future.
- The need to use professional and specialist services to meet the requirements of new funding streams and provide a level of confidence in the school's ability to manage its infrastructure.
- The school has increased its use of specialist grant finding services with the expectation of sourcing capital to use in specialist areas, the refurbishment of current accommodation and new builds.

Signed: .....  
Name: *NS MORRIS*.....  
**Academy Trust Accounting Officer**  
Date: *20/12/13*.....