



## Value for Money Statement

**Academy name: All Saints Catholic Collegiate Multi Academy Company (MAC)**

**Academy company number:**

**Year ended 31 August 2014**

As Accounting Officer of **All Saints Catholic Collegiate**, (ASCC) I am responsible and accountable for ensuring that the academy trust delivers good value in the use of public funding. I am aware of the guide to academy value for money (VfM) statements published by the Education Funding Agency and understand that value for money refers to the educational and wider social outcomes achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The purpose of this document is to illustrate how systems and procedures within the multi-academy have been established and developed in its first year to ensure accountability in providing good value for money to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

### Background Information

**All Saints Catholic Collegiate** (ASCC) was formed on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013 and officially united four Catholic primary schools with one secondary school to form a multi-academy company (MAC). The Board of Directors agreed that all academies should operate with a shared and uniform accounting database, through a single bank account for the majority of transactions. Each academy has their own local imprest bank account for low value transactions and petty cash. An accountant was appointed as Principal Finance Officer to work alongside the Accounting Officer to serve all academies within the trust, providing guidance and support, whilst securing financial operations at local and strategic level.

The key strategic objectives and outcomes as follows

- Implement standardised accounting procedures across the MAC
- Develop effective systems and procedures for monitoring and regulating financial management to secure efficacy of financial management of resources and consistency in all academies.
- Establish a School Business Manager network in order for all academies to understand and adopt consistent policies and controls

Outcomes: The key objectives have been successfully achieved and have thus allowed the Principals to effectively plan, deploy and procure resources - including service level agreements - and enable school leaders to focus on school improvement, achievement and standards in all academies

### Improving Educational Outcomes

Prior to conversion, strategic plans were agreed across all academies, with a focus on improving leadership and management of learning and teaching, including widening accountability for progress and attainment of English and Maths across the MAC. Funding for the strategic development of a self-improving and sustaining multi-academy remains fundamental to our mission. The following resources have been distributed and accessed by each academy:

- **Appointment of a serving Executive LLE/ National lead for Pupil Premium within the MAC to report directly to the Board of Directors serving as Executive Director for School Improvement, Achievement and Standards in each academy, working in partnership with Principals and external partners, and broker school-to-school support, where necessary.**



Effective planning and deployment of human resources has had a significant impact on the development of leadership at all levels. The internal appointment of an accredited advisor (formerly referred to as NCTL School Improvement Partners) provides continuous service and advice for school leaders in each academy, reducing the need to purchase separate external sources. Information on the performance, capacity and needs of each academy is collated through regular school monitoring visits and this information is shared with all principals, Academy Committees and Directors. VfM can be evidenced through the deployment of staff within the MAC, in addition to service-level agreements with an outstanding secondary academy and a local teaching school, which have been brokered via the Executive Principal, following consultation and liaison with school leaders. Examples include:

- All five academies have benefitted from the input of senior and middle leaders through well-established and effective networking teams; this has strengthened support for senior and middle leaders, teaching and support staff.
  - The appointment of a family support worker to work across two primary academies has proven to maximise expertise and provide excellent value for money.
  - Site supervisors have worked collaboratively to improve the maintenance, safety and security of three primary academies.
  - Secondary specialists in MFL, ICT and PE have provided support for learning and teaching. In MFL pupil progress has improved at primary level, particularly for more able pupils.
- **Purchase and refinement of pupil tracking systems in each academy.**  
More detailed analysis of pupil, progress, individuals and groups, has been improved through the introduction of a more detailed data system. Some senior and middle leaders are more developed, whilst others are in the emergent stage. The systems for recording and identifying gaps are more prominent and readily available. This has led to improvements in the ability of senior leaders to inject more rigour in analysing and using data to monitor and drive pupil progress by holding all staff to account.
  - **External reviews of learning and teaching in each academy, by Ofsted accredited teams.**  
These have both identified strengths and weaknesses, and validated self-evaluation judgements in each academy.
  - **SEN review by lead professional;**  
An external review of SEND provision was completed with input from an external LA advisor. This has resulted in additional recruitment of staff to support provision for pupils with SEND; school-to-school support for SEND through deployment of a SENDco within the MAC to provide leadership support.
  - **Reviews of leadership and management, including Sixth-form provision, by external teams, the Executive Principal and Education Consultant.**

A new principal of the secondary academy has been permanently appointed, whilst several temporary appointments to the senior leadership team have been made to develop the capacity of leadership and management. In addition, new local academy representatives have been appointed, with the necessary skills and expertise to provide support and challenge to senior leaders.



Leadership of Sixth-Form has been strengthened by the appointment of a new Head of Sixth-Form. This has also served to strengthen to capacity of leadership at the secondary academy, St. Thomas More.

At primary level, CPD opportunities for school leaders has been well-developed under the strategic direction of the Executive Principal, through identifying and brokering school-to-school support for principals, senior and middle leaders by staff working collaboratively across the MAC.

- **CPD for governance, including accredited training and reviews.**

Governance in all academies has benefitted from formal NCTL-accredited training by the former Director of the Diocesan Schools Commission (now DES). This has enabled school leaders to refine the roles and responsibilities of governance at local level, pool resources and improve efficacy of meetings, whilst distributing responsibilities for governance across the MAC. This has resulted in greater involvement, challenge and accountability of governance across the MAC.

### **Pupil Premium Reviews**

As part of the Pupil Premium Policy, all academies report regularly to the Executive Principal/Director and Board of Directors on how the funds have been utilised in each of the schools and, more importantly, the *impact* on pupil progress and outcomes. Within each academy this data is analysed for all year groups. Successful impact is evident in some, though not sufficiently in all, academies and this remains a firm priority for the future.

The Executive Principal/Director is a National Leader for Pupil Premium and is commissioned by several Local Authorities to review primary and secondary schools' performance for this vulnerable group. Funding for this area of school improvement is inclusive of this role and continuous support, challenge and guidance is provided across all academies.

There has been a strong emphasis within the MAC strategic plan on collaboration between the schools in the MAC and this has taken several forms. Moderation of pupil's results has taken place across the four primary academies and also for Year 6 and 7 cohorts across the MAC. Outstanding Year 6 teachers have gone into the secondary school to share best practise with year 7 and 8 teachers and similarly excellent subject leaders in the secondary school have taught primary school pupils for example in MFL.

### **Financial Governance and Oversight**

The academy has appointed an external responsibility officer who will be carrying out at least biannual reviews of the purchasing, salaries, income and banking systems and procedures. In addition the audit committee, to whom the responsible officer reports to, will determine intermittent reviews, as and when necessary. A review has already taken place across the MAC focusing on expenses and travel claims. Following the review a MAC policy was adopted to ensure transparency, regularity and compliancy across the MAC. The Finances Directors and Academy Representatives Committees ensure all recommendations and actions are followed through at director level, and by each individual Academy Committee.

An internal audit programme has also been timetabled whereby the Principal Finance officer will regularly be accompanied by the Accounting Officer, to complete monitoring visits in each academy and ensure the appropriate controls and bank reconciliations have taken place on an accurate and timely basis. Three visits have already taken place.



Monthly reports are prepared by each academy for review and comparison against planned expenditure, to inform discussion with the Principal and the Finance link academy representative. In addition quarterly MAC management accounts are prepared and presented to the Finance and Resources Directors' committee.

Sustainability in the longer term is also important and each academy has prepared a medium term plan, again via the process of a school business manager's workshop to ensure consistency of approach.

The school business managers meet on at least half termly basis to ensure there is excellent communication between within the MAC, consistency of adoption of policies and procedures, sharing best practice, agreement of dates and financial schedules standardisation of reporting and continuing professional development.

A financial scheme of delegation has been adopted, which incorporates the negotiation of all service level agreements to be approved by the Board of Directors.

### **Better Purchasing**

Optimising the financial resources and procuring the correct service at the right price, time and quantity is at the heart of all procurement decisions.

The centralised accounting database allows for the analysis of supplier usage across the MAC. Several MAC wide contracts have already been negotiated and others are planned for next year. There is a clear and transparent procurement policy which is rigorously followed.

A new supplier has been appointed to deliver Health and Safety across the MAC, at a slightly higher cost per pupil but the service outcomes are considerably higher. This had been identified as an area of above average risk within the MAC.

The focus this first year has been in achieving standardisation and consistency of approach across the MAC; but at the same time understanding the need and existence of local variation. Benchmarking of all staffing costs and other resources has taken place for this purpose. This has allowed for best practice within an academy to be identified and shared across the others

The focus next year will be more outward looking; the DfE website will be used to access financial benchmarking data of similar MACs, and introduce more regular and systematic bench-marking comparisons within each academy, with those of similar size and demographics.

The academy has procedures for assessing need and obtaining goods and services which provide the best value for money. One such procedure is a focused School Business Manager workshop, whereby all service level agreements are compared and contrasted.

A new MAC contract for the primary academies has been agreed with the catering providers which collectively is significantly more favourable than the previous agreements for each individual academy. Economies of scale have also been achieved in the re-negotiation of insurance rates; a further example where savings have been achieved has been in the provision of electronic tablets for pupils. Three primary academies have pooled resources to boost purchasing power and secure improved rates.

The MAC is not VAT registered and has not yet developed streams of external income for services charged, but this remains an area for future development. As part of the School Business Managers network, grant opportunities have been identified and shared.



### **Reviewing Controls and Managing Risks**

The role of the audit committee - a subcommittee of the main Board of Directors - is to maintain an oversight of the MAC's governance, internal control risk- management and value for money framework. This committee meets at least termly to fulfil this obligation.

Each academy has prepared an individual risk register to identify and mitigate key risk areas and allow a MAC wide risk profile to be established and monitored. The insurance policy is reviewed annually to ensure the level of cover is adequate.

With the new Health and Safety provider, an external audit of Health and Safety within each academy has been undertaken. Each academy has been assessed against a framework of competencies and an individual level of maturity identified. Following this an action plan has been developed to address the areas of need.

### **Moving Forwards**

This has been the first year of operation and several refinements and amendments have been made to policies and procedures. Moving forward it is imperative that the systematic process of self- evaluation and review of financial management and delegation is completed and reported by each Academy Committee, and by the Board of Directors; these will be validated, both by the Executive Director/Accounting Officer and externally. This rigorous process will develop accuracy, transparency and efficacy of financial planning and best value.

The overall financial objective will always be to provide the best education possible - given the current allocation of resources- without risk to the future education, opportunities and well-being of all pupils within All Saints Catholic Collegiate.

Signed:

Name: M Yates

Accounting Officer for All Saints Catholic Collegiate

Date 30/12/2014