

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: Federation of Mowden Schools Academy Trust

Company number: 8027205

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Federation of Mowden Schools 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

- Targeted Improvement

Governors and the Senior Leadership Team regularly review the staffing structure in conjunction with the budget and school development plan. Staff are deployed efficiently to ensure that educational standards continue to improve. Alternative staffing structures are considered to ensure succession planning.

The Academy monitors the progress of all pupils and is able to identify those not making expected progress. Small group or individual support is provided, as appropriate, for these pupils, across the whole spectrum of needs, to assist their progress.

- Focus on individual pupils

An established mentoring programme is in place to enable every pupil to understand and achieve their potential. This process includes identifying the level of each pupil at the start of the school year and monitoring their progress over time through a tracking system. The data from this process is analysed for effectiveness and to identify areas for additional support. Data analysis also includes looking at specific groups, for example, children with English as an additional language and looked after children and pupils receiving Pupil Premium.

Teaching Assistants are deployed effectively to provide additional support to individual pupils and smaller groups.

The staffing structure also enables numeracy and literacy to be taught in smaller groups of around 20 or less, rather than in full classes of 30+. The current staffing structure also supports intervention strategies to be implemented, enabling children to be taught in small or individual groups.

- Collaboration

The Academy Trust regularly works with local primary and secondary schools to share good practice and achieve best value. This year, to support transition between Primary and Secondary schools, our year 6 pupils have received extra support from local secondary schools. This has included two way visits by staff from secondary schools and our pupils, working on sporting and performing arts projects.

In addition, pupils in year 6 who were identified as able to work towards level 6 literacy worked in small groups with teachers from a local secondary school; this arrangement proved to be very beneficial. The Academy has also worked in a reciprocal arrangement with a local secondary school to disseminate good practice for teaching numeracy and literacy.

The School Business Manager is a member of the Darlington SBM Network which developed momentum over the year. School Business Managers from member schools across the Darlington area meet regularly to discuss agenda items covering a broad spectrum of issues. Achievements during the last year include addressing broadband issues and developing collaborative purchasing to create cost savings, for example reprographic costs.

New Initiatives

During 2013/2014 the Academy has commissioned a consultant to facilitate the development of support for pupils through improved mentoring and tracking processes.

The Academy has recently completed a significant building programme across the Trust Schools, funded by the Local Authority to support an anticipated increase in pupil admission numbers. A contribution from the Academy's budget has enabled the development of existing classrooms to create a positive learning environment throughout the school to support achievement. The Academy has strived to create stimulating learning areas for our pupils including a multi-purpose science and art area.

The Academy has continued to develop Middle Management to enable more distributed leadership to improve teaching and learning; we are seeing a positive impact from this development. Going forward the Academy aims to explore the possibility of developing specialist teachers to further support achievement in our schools.

Our two apprentices completed NVQ level 2 Business Management qualification and provided a great support to the admin team, they are now working towards NVQ level 3 and continue to provide valuable support to the administration of the school.

Quantifying Improvements

Key State 1

The percentage of pupils attaining level 2 and above (these included levels: 2+, 2b, 2a and 3) were significantly above the National Average. This was in all subjects: speaking and listening, reading, writing, maths and science.

Key State 2

The percentage of pupils attaining level 4+ and level 5 in the key stage two assessments tests were above the National Average. It was pleasing that pupils' performance in a newly introduced test 'Grammar, punctuation and spelling' were significantly above the National average.

Please note that 13.1% of this cohort attained level 6 in their maths test, a level which is usually attained in year 8.

Whilst the above data is encouraging, it is our wish and belief that we should and can improve on these.

• Financial Governance and Oversight

The Academy continues to work towards Governor Mark.

The Academy has a dedicated Finance and Audit Committee, who are responsible for determining the school's financial priorities linking these to the long term vision, the School Development Plan and directions given by the Full Governing Body.

Items for discussion and action by the committee are:

- 1) To approve the start budget for the financial year.
- 2) To establish and maintain an up to date 3 year financial plan.
- 3) To consider a budget position statement including virement decisions at least termly and to report significant anomalies from the anticipated position to the Governing Body.
- 4) To ensure that the school operates within the Financial Regulations.
- 5) To annually review and appoint the independent examiner (Internal Auditor) and the External Accountants, in line with EFA guidelines.
- 6) To review appropriate financial benchmarking data, in order to compare the schools financial performance with other similar schools.
- 7) To ensure that ring fenced funding streams, such as Pupil Premium and PE and Sports Grant, will be used as directed and to maximum effect.
- 8) To make decisions on expenditure following recommendations from other committees.
- 9) To ensure, as far as is practical, that Health and Safety issues are appropriately prioritised.
- 10) To determine whether sufficient funds are available for staff pay increments and increases.
- 11) To assess the possibility of further collaborative work with other education providers and business links that will allow for increased sharing

of good practice.

12) To ensure that the academy is a going concern and will remain viable for the foreseeable future.

Name: Mr Brian Watkinson
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 17 Dec 2014