

# Value for Money Statement

**Organisation name: CROFTON ACADEMY**

**Company number: 7646836**

**Year ended 31 August 2014**

I accept that as accounting officer of CROFTON ACADEMY 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.

In doing so, I have considered how best I may ensure:

- the economic, efficient and effective use of resources to achieve outstanding educational outcomes for all our students;
- the avoidance of waste and extravagance;
- the prudent and economical administration of our Academy Trust;
- the establishment and maintenance of sound and appropriate financial governance, including robust controls on expenditure, keeping and reporting of up to date financial records, continuous financial monitoring and reporting to all stakeholders;
- value for money in all financial transactions;
- short and longer term financial planning.

Whilst we operate within our funding levels and utilise resources correctly and with probity, we also continuously strive for improved educational and wider outcomes for our students with the resources available to us. We take our responsibilities as a caring employer seriously and work hard to make our academy an outstanding place to learn, work and develop in a professional manner.

Improving educational outcomes

We have great expectations of all our students and encourage every young person to rise above the ordinary and consequently, we offer a broad curriculum which is balanced and personalised, taking into account individual strengths. During the period ended 31 August 2014, the Academy's specific school priorities were as follows:

- to aim for an aspirational target of 100% good or outstanding lessons;
- to develop new structures to formalise coaching and mentoring and address issues including independent learning and differentiation;
- to maintain significantly high levels of attainment with a clear focus on individual pupil development and impacts;
- to drive 'Pupil Premium' attainment;
- to improve attendance to above the national average, with an aspirational target of 96%;
- to ensure that gifted and talented students achieve their full potential;
- to ensure that the school is well placed for new performance measures;
- to ensure that the school is responsive to national changes in curriculum development, including assessment;
- to respond to the new SEN code of practice;
- to further develop the social, moral, spiritual and cultural attitudes throughout the school; to review provision and make consequent adjustments.

Our academy focusses upon the wide range of needs of our students in providing one-to-one tuition where necessary, particularly for numeracy and literacy. Support for Pupil Premium students is personalised to the individual needs of the student and is focussed on maximising progress and closing the attainment gap. Students have accessed:

- one to one learning mentor support;
- the support of our Parental Support Worker;
- small groups to build up confidence, motivation and social skills;
- small group reading, spelling and numeracy support;
- vocational and personalised curriculum choices;
- after school learning support and Summer School;
- financial support for equipment, transport, residential and non-residential trips and music tuition.

The impact of these interventions is measured by tracking the progress of pupil premium students at six assessment points during the year, against expected threshold measures.

Examination results for 2014 demonstrate that we continue to maintain our excellent standards and full details are available on the Academy website: [www.croftonacademy.org.uk](http://www.croftonacademy.org.uk)

## Staffing

Staffing is the most costly area of expenditure. The curriculum model was considered very carefully and opportunities to minimise excess staffing are explored, whilst ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning and adult-student ratios was met.

The Governing body regularly reviews its' staffing structure and deploys staff efficiently to support the curriculum to meet the needs of our students. A quality CPD programme is in place via performance management to support delivery of school priorities and individual personal development and improvement. To address leadership succession planning and staff retention issues we have given middle managers opportunities to experience Senior Leadership Team responsibilities.

We have recently moved away from the LA and have established an in-house HR service to provide an independent quality service for our staff. With this, a formal process of monitoring staff absence is in place in order to achieve continued improvements in attendance and reduced levels of absenteeism.

Additionally, we collaborate with educational experts and schools within the Wakefield and wider authorities to share good practice, in line with the appraisal and performance procedures.

## Financial governance and oversight

The Trust's system of financial governance includes strong oversight by the Governing Body/trustees and me, as Accounting Officer. Half-termly Governors/Trustee meetings are held and the Finance, Buildings and Resources (FBR) Committee meet at least once a term to monitor the financial operations of the Academy. The CFO provides detailed budget monitoring reports for scrutiny and challenge and the budget is reviewed against expectations and projections.

The Governing Body has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and has decided not to appoint an internal auditor. However, a suitably qualified Responsible Officer (RO) provided advice on financial matters and performed a range of checks on the Academy's financial systems. Additionally, the Academy receives advice and support throughout the year from its External Auditors on compliance and accounting practice, particularly on complex issues.

## Cost Effective Purchasing

Crofton Academy applies the principles of best value when making decisions about:

- the allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the Academy
- the targeting of resources to improves standards and the quality of provision
- the use of resources to best support the various educational needs of all students.

The Scheme of Delegation outlines the procurement framework and procedures to be followed to ensure that Value for money is obtained and demonstrated. There is a documented procurement policy issued to all budget holders, which highlights procedures to be followed when obtaining quotations. Tender exercises are undertaken to ensure that high value contracts are properly assessed against the marketplace and Governors are involved in this process. Regular reports are issued to Governors and all larger items of expenditure and contracts are discussed in detail at the FBR Committee and key decisions communicated to the full Governing Body.

We regularly review our Service Level Agreements and contracts to ensure that they are fit for purpose and not only offer value for money but quality service provision also. In this financial year we have reviewed and tendered for photocopying, IT technical support, refuse collection and grounds maintenance.

We work closely within a network of local schools and undertake joint procurement exercises as appropriate to endeavour to seek best value. Additionally, we utilise online procurement tools such as GPS, TES, YPO framework agreements to ensure we obtain quotations from a wider marketplace and benefit from discounts available.

#### Collaboration

Now working in partnership with Wakefield College, the Academy is extending its proven track record of delivery of high standards of education to include post-16 provision. From September 2013, the Centre has operated under the name 'Sixth form at Crofton Academy' and all students are registered and funded learners of Wakefield College. Students are guided by a combination of academy and college staff that ensures they receive the best in academic study, personal development, future planning and guidance/support they need to succeed.

We work closely with our pyramid of Primary schools and host pyramid INSET days. Additionally, our MFL team have been working with these schools to provide learning opportunities for pupils, which not only include learning the language, but also cultural activities to share different experiences.

#### Income Generation

As part of the legal partnering agreement between the Academy and Wakefield College, the Academy trustees approved a financial advance to provide a programme related investment in the form of an interest bearing loan of £500k to be used by the College towards the construction and establishment of the Post-16 Centre. The payment will be made in December 2014 and will provide approximately £15k of additional resources. The Secretary of State gave his approval in September 2013 and the new building was opened officially in September 2014.

Governors have committed a further £500k from Reserves to transform the outdoor Sports and PE facilities by developing modern multi-activity areas, during the forthcoming year. By enhancing the delivery of a wider range of sports and physical activities the Academy hopes to engage and inspire more pupils to choose sport outside of school hours and encourage use by wider community groups to maximise income generation.

#### Risk Management

A number of systems have been implemented within day to day operational practice to assess risks that the Academy may be exposed to, in relation to professional/employment procedures, teaching and learning, health and safety and particularly in relation to the control of finance. Appropriate levels of insurance are in place and contingency funds exist to deal with unforeseen circumstances which may or may not impact on resources. Detailed budget reports are received by the Governors/trustees and weekly meetings take place between me and the CFO where updates and current issues are discussed.

Surplus funds are invested to benefit from bank interest and provide additional resources of approximately £5k.

Statutory returns are made on time, avoiding financial and extra administrative penalties.

#### Future Developments

To streamline our payroll process, we have moved to one pay date and one payroll for all staff and in February 2015 e-payslips will be introduced.

During 2014-15 we will be exploring opportunities for the provision of in-house school meals to provide quality nutritional meals at better value.

I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the systems of internal control. During the year ended 31 August 2014, the review has been informed by:

- the work of the Responsible Officer;
- the work of the External Auditor;
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process; and
- the work of the executive managers within the Academy Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

No material control issues have been identified during the year.

**Name:** Mr Jez Horsley  
**Academy Trust Accounting Officer**

**Date:** 03 Feb 2015