

Value for Money Statement

Overton Grange Academy Trust (Overton Grange School)

Academy Trust Company Number: 07627110

Year ended 31st August 2014

As Accounting Officer of **Overton Grange School** 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.

The Academy Trust is committed to:

1. Improving educational outcomes

Staffing Structure

The 2013 Ofsted Inspection Report graded Leadership and Management of the school as 'Good'. This has been achieved through good governance and effective management by the Senior Leadership Team well supported by Middle Leaders. In response to the rapidly changing educational policy environment, the role and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders are kept under review and refined as necessary to ensure continued effectiveness. The 'support staff' have recently been re-organised to ensure value for money.

The Senior Leadership Team includes Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers, the School Business Manager and the SENCo and ensures that all students are supported academically and pastorally. Significant resources have been invested ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum that is well taught, supported by high quality pastoral care, guidance and support.

The school has invested significantly in Continuing Professional Development and succession planning to ensure that the school has a pool of well qualified and experienced teaching and non-teaching staff.

To ensure a breadth of experience amongst the teaching staff, the school participates in the School Direct and PGCE programmes with local Higher Education providers. Newly Qualified Teachers and Trainee Teachers are well supported by the school, ensuring that the school achieves value for money in terms of recruitment and that the school has new staff already familiar with the ethos and values of the school.

To improve educational outcomes, the school carries out careful succession planning and internal promotion to ensure continuity. However when posts do become vacant, the school will use a variety of recruitment strategies to ensure that posts are filled with the best qualified staff available and that students' educational outcomes are maximised by high

quality appointments. When agency staff are used for medium or long term bookings, the school ensures they are subject specialists and has negotiated contracts to ensure that it pays preferential rates and attracts rebates for volume bookings.

Teaching staff are assessed annually as part of their performance management against individually agreed objectives and the Teacher Standards. They are only eligible for a salary increment if they can demonstrate to their reviewer and the governors that they have met objectives and standards which have improved educational outcomes.

As well as investing in the professional development of staff, the school has used Teaching, Learning and Responsibility (TLR) payments to reward staff that take on significant responsibilities within the school. A TLR3 has been awarded this year to teaching staff with responsibility for Pupil Premium students and narrowing the performance gap. The award and payment of TLRs and allowances is reviewed at line management and performance management reviews, to ensure that the payment of the allowance is improving educational outcomes and represents value to the school.

2. Financial governance and oversight

The governance and strategic oversight of the school is the responsibility of the Governing Body and the financial governance of the school is delegated by the Governing Body to governors on the Resources Committee. In accordance with this delegation and the provisions of the EFA's and school's Financial Handbook, Governors carry out the following tasks:

- the initial review and authorisation of the three year and annual budgets
- the regular monitoring of actual expenditure and income against budget
- authorising orders and the award of contracts up to £15,000
- authorising changes to the academy personnel establishment
- reviewing the reports of the Responsible Officer on the effectiveness of the financial procedures and controls.

As Accounting Officer, I have day to management of the school's financial operations and meet regularly with the School Business Manager to ensure that I am fully aware of the school's financial position and any financial risks to the school.

Over the past academic year, on recommendation from the school via the Accounting Officer, Governors have approved projects for a new Reception area to improve safety for staff and students at the school, invested in new IT and telephone equipment.

During the 2013/14 academic year the school has participated in a benchmarking exercise with other local schools and Governors have also received benchmarking data from an external agency which they have used when monitoring the school's operations. The exercise has highlighted areas such as agency supply cover and lettings income for review in 2014/15 by the School Business Manager to ensure that the school is achieving value for money.

3. Better purchasing

The school is committed to ensure that all purchasing made by the school represents value for money. We achieve this by ensuring that:

- All departmental orders are raised in advance by approved purchase order
- Quotes are sought in accordance with the school's financial procedures
- Project appraisals and tenders are conducted for contracts over delegated limits. In 2013/14 the school successfully joined with five other local schools to carry out a group tender for a cleaning contract.
- Contracts are entered on to the school's management software to ensure that a register is held of contracts and services provided to the school and that these do not automatically rollover without the school ensuring that the contracts are fit for purpose and continue to represent value for money for the school
- Benchmarking, comparison and procurement with local schools.
- Use of framework and consortium purchasing agreements.

4. Maximising income generation.

In 2013/14 the school has continued to develop its extensive lettings programme to ensure that value for money is achieved from use of the school buildings. The school is used by community groups, sports clubs and commercial organisations every day of the week. Benchmarking has highlighted however that this is an area for further review in terms of achieving value for money.

The school has also sought to maximise income generation by encouraging parents to apply for free school meals thus enabling the school to qualify for pupil premium. The school has ensured that procedures are in place to collect premium from students living outside of the borough.

The school has also continued to work closely with the Local Authority and neighbouring authorities to ensure that High Needs Funding is collected and paid at the appropriate hours and rates for students attending the school.

Finance staff are vigilant to ensure that all government grants are claimed and returns submitted according to deadlines to ensure that the school claims its correct entitlement.

5. Reviewing controls and managing risks

The school has also achieved value for money in 2013/14 by ensuring that controls are reviewed and risks are managed. The school has developed strict financial controls to ensure that all expenditure is raised by purchase order and that when authorising payments, the authoriser is confirming that all goods have been received and that the invoice should be paid. Payroll procedures exist to ensure that all variations to the standard payroll are identified and authorised.

In managing risks, the school has developed a risk register and this has been reviewed by both senior managers and governors to ensure that the school has either managed or insured against risks.

6. Lessons learned (review of operations to maximise resources)

The school is continually reviewing its operations to maximise resources and has identified that some of its operations such as offering work experience to Year 10 students, whilst desirable did not offer value for money in terms of delivery of the curriculum and in light of the Raised Participation Age. The timing of examination entries has been another area for review where there have been opportunities to review value for money whilst balancing the educational outcomes for students.

In summary, during 2013/14, Overton Grange has been committed to ensuring that the funds it receives and the income that it generates are used to the benefit of students currently in the school. This is evidenced by the fact that the school has not built up large reserves but has invested all income in staff, other resources and equipment.

Signed.....

Mr Peter Butterworth, Headteacher and Accounting Officer

Date: 18/12/14