

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: Pershore High School

Academy trust company number: 7665364

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Pershore High 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.

Improving educational results:

The trust has ensured that educational standards have continued to improve for the benefit of pupils from 2011 to 2013. OFSTED (July 2013) reported that students make good progress and achieve well, with standards by the end of Year 11 being above average. Students' achievement in the Sixth Form is outstanding/ they make rapid progress in Years 12 and 13, and achieve exceptionally well at AS and A2 levels, as well as on other programmes.

My personal performance objectives for the year are:

Pupil Progress

GCSE

Of a cohort of 250 the percentage of students achieving 5+ grades at C or higher, including English and Maths, at GCSE – Target 77%, actual 63%.

The Worcestershire and National performance for this headline measure was as follows:

Worcestershire – 62.9% (2013), 57.6% (2014). National – 59.2% (2013), 52.6% (2014).

% of pupils making 3 levels of progress in English 64%. This has continued to improve since 2012 and 2013 but is still low – Worcestershire average 70.7%, National 70.9%. This remains an ongoing improvement issue.

% of pupils making 3 levels of progress in Mathematics – 77%. This indicates exceptional progress in comparison with both Worcestershire (68.5%) and National (66.3%) levels.

% pupils achieving a C in English - 67%, Maths – 80%.

Best 8 total points score 324.3. Average point score 40.5 (where C is 39 to 40.9, C+ is 41.0 to 42.9). Average grade per pupil C.

% pupils achieving EBacc 23% (Worcestershire 23.7%, National 22.5%).

% of low prior attainers achieving A* - C at GCSE including English and Maths
3%

% of middle attainers achieving A* - C at GCSE including English and Maths 62%

% of high attainers achieving A* - C at GCSE including English and Maths
91%

The most recent data collection (October half term 2014) indicates: Year 11 – 5A*-C including English and Maths stands at 62% with a gap of 30% for Pupil Premium students. Both these figures have improved significantly from the summer term of Year 10 (and Yr 11 last year 51% and 30%). We have become a member of the PiXL organisation (Partners in Excellence) and are currently implementing a range of intervention strategies which they have tested and proved to work in other schools.

Year 10 - this is the first cohort who will be measured by Progress 8. Teachers have been asked to predict their most likely GCSE grade based on their current performance and this has been converted into Progress 8 measures. Currently: Attainment 8 average grade = C, students are on average predicted to be 0.71 of a grade above their P8 targets and 76% are expected to achieve English and Maths.

The new Information Management System (SIMS) has facilitated much closer and regular tracking of pupil progress. The exemplar student report shows the clarity that this affords to pupils, parents and staff alike.

A Level

Of the A2 cohort of 100, 89% gained 3 A levels at A* - E – this is a result of our policy of persisting with 'marginal' students. % of grades at A – E – 99.5%, 70.2% at C or higher, 43% at A* - B, 11% at A*. Average point score per entry – 204.2 (where 205 = C). Average point score per entry as a grade is C-
ALP's A2 progression score, where 1 is top and 9 bottom:

2011-13; 2012-12; 2013-14; 2014-4 T-score 5; 3 Year T-score 4, putting us between the top 40 and 25% on its thermometer.

2014 was not a vintage A2 year, but follows on from the mediocre 2012 GCSE performance of this cohort. However 85% of Sixth Form leavers did achieve their first and second choice destinations.

AS examinations in 2014 saw good progress. Progression and T-scores over 3 years: 2012-3, 2014-3, giving a 3 year T-score of 3 (top 25%)

Current Sixth Form

For the first time, we have collected Forecast Grades for Sixth Form students in each subject. Staff were asked to state the AS or A2 grade that they thought the students will achieve in the summer, based on professional judgement and AS results if applicable. Split grades (e.g. B/C) were permitted. Every half term the exercise will be repeated – the forecasting should get increasingly accurate. From these Forecast Grades, the ALPS Value-Added scores have been calculated and distributed to Heads of subject. At A2, the overall Forecast ALPS Value-Added score is 0.97 which equates to a 3 which would put us back in the top 25% of providers. The last two years has seen the performance at A2 fall below this threshold. There are 7 subjects (Chemistry, Computing, Dance, English Literature, Photography, Physics and Psychology) that are forecast to be within the top 25% of providers. There are only 2 (Art and Product Design) that are forecast to be within the bottom 25% of providers.

At AS teachers are operating with limited data and have relied heavily upon the ALPS Target grades for their forecasts. The overall Forecast ALPS Value-Added score is 1.57 which puts us in the top 15% of providers. During the year a number of students will drop from 4 to 3 main curriculum AS subjects. This will reduce our overall value-added which depends on volume in addition to quality. However, some electives were not included in this round of forecasting – including them will actually boost our overall Value-Added score. A total of 12 subjects (Biology, Chemistry, Computing, Drama, French, History, ICT, Maths, Music, Physics, Psychology and Science in Society) are forecast to be in the top 25% of providers while only 2 subjects (Business Studies and German) are forecast to be in the bottom 25% of providers.

Targeted improvement:

The trust keeps its staffing structure under constant review and has maintained a broad and balanced curriculum during a time of falling rolls (as a result of a short period of low birth rates. OFSTED (July 2013) again observed that the school offers a wide range of courses and subjects, both in the main school and the Sixth Form. The choice of programmes on offer is reviewed regularly, driven by students' needs and interests. There is an excellent choice of activities outside the classroom that enrich students' learning.

The percentage of lessons graded as good and outstanding were 62% and 38% respectively in 2013-14. The process was rigorous but brought improved outcomes

With significant budgetary restraints due to the way in which Worcestershire is funded it has become necessary to review the whole school staffing structure to significantly reduce the staffing costs. Redundancies will be inevitable in the very near future and the Leadership Team are looking at ways in which this can be come without damaging the current curriculum offer, but this may not be possible to do.

Focus on individual pupils:

Meeting the differing needs of students is a big priority. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. According to OFSTED (July 2013), their achievement has improved over recent years. Students in the Autism Base also achieve well as a result of good quality specialist support that they receive. These students are integrated well into mainstream lessons, reflecting the school's strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities.

In terms of Pupil Premium, of the 38 students counted as 'Ever 6' 36% gained 5+ including English and Maths. This compares with 63% of all pupils (a gap of 27%) and 69% of all non-Pupil Premium pupils (a gap of 33%). Although the gap is still too large, it compares with 49% and 51% in 2013.

Looking further into these statistics, our problem is the MAB (Middle) pupils. The Pupil Premium gaps are HAB – 7%, MAB – 34%, Low 0.4%. Concentration upon closing this gap is a key priority.

Collaboration:

The trust engages well with other providers and experts. This is particularly successful in the development of links with further education providers. OFSTED (July 2013) again commented that 'students who attend alternative provision make good progress. Their achievement on these vocational courses is carefully tracked by the school.' We are also engaged in Wychavon 0-19 Early Help consortium are actively involved in the development of the Aspire Academy Free School (Behaviour Support), has close links with the University of Gloucester and Worcester, Schools of Tomorrow and many more links.

Through the Learning Ambassadors project, there has been increasingly active involvement of pupils in raising the quality of Teaching and Learning. Two Peer2Peer visits have included Learning Ambassadors working alongside visiting senior leaders from a total of 9 Worcestershire schools in lesson observations. These took place in July and November 2014, and paperwork is contained in the pack. Learning Ambassadors have also overseen two student surveys on challenge in lessons – details are again included. Their work will also key into that of the Schools of Tomorrow organisation (formerly the Beauchamp Group).

New initiatives:

The trust is fully involved in new activities such as the South Worcestershire Teaching School Alliance, in conjunction with Prince Henry's High School, Evesham. The trust has sought to improve its financial performance through additional activities such as the sale

of IT and businesses services to feeder schools. This has enabled us to accommodate additional activities.

A report on SMSC was provided to governors at the Summer Term 2014 meeting but was formalised in the 2013-14 Review of Year issued at Presentation Evening. The Parent Panel has been instrumental in contributing to increased participation in extra-curricular activities. Parents have provided extra support in areas as diverse as Rugby, Girls' Football, Triathlon and Badminton. We are now participating in an inter-school chess league. Great success has also been enjoyed in STEM and entrepreneurial activities. The Year 8 girls won the District Cross Country, the Year 10 boys are County Football finalists. Extensive community participation continues and is further encouraged by the new electronic rewards system – Epraise.

Governors have directed the Leadership Team to ensure the successful implementation of a new pay policy and performance management system, and the subsequent provision of high quality training and development for all staff. Success criteria to include: A rise in the proportion of outstanding lessons (to 30% in 2014), evidence of the active engagement of pupils in raising the quality of teaching and learning.

Quantifying improvements:

Improvements can be quantified though on-going high levels of educational attainment, good attendance and behaviour – OFSTED (July 13) judging the latter to be outstanding.

Financial governance and oversight:

The governing body is closely involved in all aspects of the school's work and makes an important contribution to school improvement. Governors provide both support and challenge to school leaders. They have a secure understanding of information on students' achievement and know how well the school is performing in comparison to others. Governors visit lessons and individual governors are linked to particular subject departments.

Governors have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching across the school. Through the 'learning links' group, they gather students' views and discuss potential improvements to learning with both students and staff. Governors are very familiar with the school's systems for managing staff performance and make sure that there are secure links between the quality of teachers' work and pay awards.

The new pay policy and performance management policy were introduced and implemented successfully. Appendix I was incorporated into the performance review paperwork without any hitch. Therefore, a points system has been introduced upon

which pay decisions are made. This applies across the main scale and for transition to and across UPS. A summary chart is enclosed in this paper work.

The governing body manages the school budget well. There is a designated governor responsible for checking on the impact of pupil premium funding and reporting back to the full governing body. Governors fulfil all statutory responsibilities, including those related to safeguarding.

The governors have appointed an RO and have regular reports on financial procedures. The Finance and Business Director provides a budget report monthly to Governors and gives a more in-depth report at the termly meetings. Governors have been given a forward projection based on potential student numbers and using assumptions on expenditure.

Better purchasing:

We have always prided ourselves on the ability to gain best value with our purchasing. Where possible we have used our collaborative partnerships with other schools and academies to gain best value through economies of scale. Where this is not possible a complete and thorough tendering process is used to ensure that competitive prices are gained for products against a required specification.

The following strategy form part of the trusts financial manual:

Best Value Strategy

1 Introduction

1.1 This document establishes the Academy's Best Value Strategy for purchasing. It sets out:

- Why a best value strategy is needed;
- The benefits to the academy of having a best value strategy;
- The key approaches to best value.

1.2 The strategy will, at this stage, concentrate on obtaining best value in purchasing. This can be extended to other key areas, such as the delivery of curriculum; at a later date should the Governing Body feel this would be beneficial.

2 Why the strategy is needed

2.1 Best Value is a statutory duty on local authorities to secure continuous improvements in the way that services and functions are exercised by the most economic, efficient and effective means possible. Whilst best value does not apply statutorily to Academy's governing bodies, academies are expected to demonstrate that they are following best value principles in their expenditure of public money, and as part of their evaluation of standards, the curriculum, partnership with parents and management.

2.2 In managing their budgets all academies should be striving to utilise available funding in the most efficient and effective manner for the school. Key to this is seeking to obtain best value for all purchases being made.

2.3 The principles of Best Value have received a significant level of exposure to the general public. This higher profile has resulted in a far greater level of awareness, understanding and expectation by parents and in many cases the students of the academy. The academy has a duty to be open in ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of how it intends to ensure best value is obtained.

2.4 The DfE's Fair Funding Scheme establishes a requirement on academies to consider best value. As part of the scheme there is a requirement on all academies to submit, along with their annual plan, a best value statement. This should set out the steps being taken in the course of the year to ensure that expenditure, particularly in respect of large service contracts, will reflect the principles of the Best Value regime. The formulation of a strategy will help the academy meet these requirements.

2.5 Finally, the development and introduction of a best value strategy, would give the academy the opportunity to be at the forefront, leading on an area other academies will have to become involved in over the next few years.

3. The benefits of a Best Value strategy

3.1 The introduction of a Best Value strategy will provide a number of key benefits to the academy.

- The strategy will formally establish, and help to highlight, the governors' commitment to creating a best value culture throughout the academy.
- The strategy will raise awareness of the benefits the academy can obtain from working towards a best value culture.
- The strategy will help to clarify governor and staff responsibilities in relation to best value.
- The strategy will provide a framework within which the academy can work towards creating a best value culture.

4. Approach to Best Value

4.1 The aim of the Best Value strategy is to help the academy achieve continuous improvement in the way it carries out its purchasing function. The approach used to ensure such improvements are achieved is to carry out a regular programme of review by applying the four key principles of best value:

- Challenge - why, how and by whom the service is provided
- Compare - performance against others
- Consult - with key stakeholders
- Compete - the use of competitive measures, wherever practicable, to secure efficient and effective provision.

4.2 By applying these principles to all aspects of the purchasing procedures, the academy can ensure that it is working positively towards establishing a process that will deliver, monitor and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the purchases being made.

Fitness for purpose:

Since becoming an academy we have evaluated all of the services and contracts that are in place, where necessary these contracts have been renegotiated to ensure that the service provided is not only the most effective, but is of the highest efficiency that can be delivered. Regular meetings with account holders are held to ensure the ongoing service is continually evaluated and, where necessary, contracts are altered to better meet the schools needs for the minimum amount of cost.

A full review of all of our contract and Service Level Agreements is underway to ensure that they are all fit for purpose and provide best value.

Benchmarking:

Benchmarking plays a large part in ensuring that the trust gains best value from all its services, including the employed staff. Every effort is made to ensure that the context of the benchmarking is taken into account i.e. using data of our statistical neighbours. Once again the close collaboration that has been adopted has created an extremely useful benchmarking platform.

Options appraisal:

Due to the funding level that Worcestershire receives, option appraisal is used whenever larger purchases are being considered. The most recent example with a large block replacement programme funded via ACMF. We looked at the benefits of traditional build compare to built off site to see which would meet the needs of the school, be future proof and conform to our best value policy. Once we selected the preferred option we tendered for it to ensure we can gain the best price for it.

Economies of scale:

As previously mentioned the trust works extremely collaboratively with other schools to ensure that every opportunity for gaining economies of scale can be monopolised.

Better income generation:

The trust has an extremely good track record of income generation; we currently have a trading arm for Catering, Business Management Services, IT support, Training and Consultancy, in addition to the traditional lettings. It is hoped to expand this trading into other professional services in the future.

Reviewing controls and managing risks:

The trust has a comprehensive Financial Risk Assessment in place which is reviewed on a regular basis. This risk assessment ensures that there is an independent Responsible Officer check carried out at least on a termly basis with a report going directly to

governors. Segregation of duties is strictly adhered to and all spends are monitored to ensure that funding is spent correctly. A management report is produced at the end of each month and is presented to the governors with a full breakdown. Governors challenge financial decisions and ensure that staffing is of a level to minimise any risk due to lack of segregation of duties. Surplus funds are invested to gain the best return that is available via deposit accounts; all investments are made at 'no risk'. The Business and Finance Director reviews the cash flow on a weekly basis and ensures that all debtors communicated with the reduce income concerns. All bank accounts are reconciled on a monthly basis with any anomalies investigated and resolved. The trust is comprehensively insured for all risks. Finally, the trust maintains an outstanding relationship with the auditors throughout the year to ensure that concerns are discussed and resolved at the earliest opportunity.

Lessons learned:

The main lesson learned is the importance of collaboration, not just for economies of scale but for sharing advice and benchmarking. Timely decision making and ensuring that the trust is suitably staffed at all times with individuals with the skills and knowledge to ensure best value is met at all times.

Signed: 

Name: Clive Corbett
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 15th December 2014