

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: Colyton Grammar School Academy Trust

Academy trust company number: 7445493

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Colyton Grammar School 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

The principal aim of the Academy Trust remains the provision of high quality learning that enables all students to fulfil their intellectual potential and become mature and emotionally well-balanced young people. To this end, the main focus of the School Development Plan for 2013/14 was "Striving for Excellence in a Time of Change". Key influences were the continuing uncertainty regarding medium and long term funding. The main foci, nevertheless, were teaching and learning, sustaining high achievement, evaluation and accountability, professional development and resources. Examples of successful programmes over the year included:

- A review of gender related performance and the production of guidelines to support the dissemination of best practice
- Parental workshops on homework and the re-writing and implementation of the school's homework policy
- Further development of the PSHE Pre-University Learning programme
- Establishment of working groups to develop and implement successful approaches to literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
- Developing and sharing the understanding of what makes a lesson "outstanding"
- Appointment of a member of staff to review and further develop approaches to SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education)
- Ensuring all departments are preparing for the implementation of curriculum and examination changes as they become known
- Further work on the development of independent learning
- Work to monitor and improve the performance of groups through e.g. guidance, individual action planning, and the implementation of SIMS Discover to monitor group performance
- Collaborative learning for staff professional development through e.g. the "Building Leadership Capital" course for middle leaders, South West Academic Trust (SWAT) learning conferences, the Jurassic Coast Teaching School Alliance (JCTSA), the use of IRIS to record lessons for professional development and the production of "Grammar Matters – Sustaining Success in the 21st Century Grammar School"

- A variety of strategies to assist with reducing In School Variation e.g. student work scrutiny, learning walks, Head of Department meetings with a specific focus on key areas for development and common operating procedures
- The continuing programme of biennial supported departmental self-review, and whole school reviews
- A continuing focus on staff development and succession planning
- A variety of support services developments
- A strategic funding review, the implications of which are ongoing
- Preparation and submission of bids under the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund, covering the Cottrill Hall and the Staff House (staff accommodation and proposed lecture theatre)
- Continuing work on the Five Year Capital Plan
- Development of additional minor capital programmes to improve Take Five (the school restaurant) and Site Staff accommodation
- Ongoing review of admissions arrangements

Student Outcomes

As a co-educational selective school, students represent the top 20-25% of the ability range and go on to achieve outstanding academic results. Students complete Key Stage 3 in two years, and then take GCSE exams at the end of Year 10. The introduction of a three year Sixth Form programme has been welcomed by universities who have been particularly positive about the research elements of the Extended Project completed as part of the AQA Baccalaureate programme.

Results in public examinations in the summer 2014 were maintained at a very high level with the school recording 34.4% of all grades at GCSE being the top A*/A. In preparation for university and employment, students study a broad curriculum with opportunities for extension work, while continuing to achieve results which place the school at the top end of national performance tables.

DfE National Performance Tables published in January 2014, rate the school very highly.

- 2014 Key Stage 4 tables ranked the school top in the table of all state and independent secondary schools.(for the second year running)
- 2014 Key Stage 5 tables ranked the school as 6th in the table of state schools and colleges (12th in 2013)

National Performance Table data for Summer 2014 is not currently available, but at A Level The Times ranked the school as 13th state mixed school and at GCSE 3rd state mixed school.

Of 108 Year 13 leavers, 85 gained places on university courses, including 12 to Oxbridge and 53 to the Russell Group. A further 13 will be applying for university entrance in 2014.

A large number of students have participated in a very wide range of activities beyond the classroom. Key achievements include the following:

- Participation in a number of major national competitions with regional and national level success in many, including the English Speaking Union Public Speaking Competition,

Biology Olympiad, Maths Challenge, Magistrates Mock Trial Competition, Young Enterprise, the Institute of Chartered Accountants Business, Accounting and Skills Education competition

- Fundraising activities for charities including the Poppy Collection, Children in Need, Typhoon Haiyan Appeal, Devon Air Ambulance, and Exeter Food Bank
- A student production of 'Little Shop of Horrors!'
- Sporting achievements including champions and/or runners up for East Devon and Devon Girls' Netball, East Devon and Devon Girls' Hockey, Devon U13 Rugby, East Devon and Devon Badminton, East Devon Cross Country, East Devon Rounders, East Devon Tennis
- Individual sporting achievements include selection to captain the Devon Cricket Team on tour in South Africa, the West Regional Schools Indoor rowing Championships, finalist in the Schools Biathlon National Championship, finalist in the Girls4Gold programme, Devon County U15 Rugby, the National School Tennis Competition, the Devon Youth Cricket Team, national GB Schools Biathlon, British Acrobatic Gymnastics Championships, selection for the West Panthers U13 hockey Team at the UK Festival of Hockey, Western Counties Swimming Championships
- Other individual achievement include the winner of the Foyle Young Poets Competition, regional finalists in an Institute of Financial Services competition, Devon winner and national finalist in the Poetry by Heart Competition, runners-up in the Oxford Medical Society Gazette essay competition, selection for the 10 week Nicaraguan/Costa Rican expedition with Raleigh International, selection for the National Youth Recorder Orchestra, runner-up in National Anti-Bullying poster competition, two PASCH scholarships to visit Germany, West of England Chess Union Congress competition joint winner, Wales v South West England International Chess Challenge, finalists in the Woolf Essay Prize competition
- Three teams in the Ten Tors Competition
- The Choir sang in Gloucester, Truro and Exeter Cathedrals and completed a successful tour in Brecon.
- Student support of a family Science Day at the Norman Lockyer Observatory
- A vibrant Sports Leaders programme, with 6th formers supporting a wide range of primary school sporting activities including the National School Games Cross Country competition
- Music group visits to a local care home

Data on attendance and behaviour continues to demonstrate the highly effective management of the school, with well below average proportions of unauthorised absence and low levels of poor behaviour.

South West Academic Trust

Directors and Headteachers remain committed to a formal partnership to support and develop the selective schools in the South West peninsula.

A number of staff development and student activities have been undertaken successfully during the period under review, including a student Challenge Day and a Student Voice Conference. Most subject areas now hold regular meetings, setting their own agendas and sharing good practice. Head teachers and Directors meet regularly. The Trust partnerships provide costs-effective staff development, targeted at the needs of selective schools, enabling staff to be outward facing while reflecting critically on Colyton's own practice. In partnership with Torquay

Boys', Torquay Girls', Churston Ferrers and Bishop Wordsworth's grammar schools, the school will offer a common 11+ Test for entry in September 2016.

Other Partnerships

In addition to being a member of the South West Academic Trust, the Academy runs a 'Building Leadership Capital' Programme for middle leadership development on behalf of the Trust. The Academy is also a National Professional Qualification for Headteachers' Development School and is recognised by the Prince's Trust Teaching Initiative for Excellence in Mathematics. Colyton Grammar School also holds the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award (renewed Autumn 2014), the International School Award and is a partner school of the University of Exeter for the delivery of initial teacher training. In July 2013, the Academy was selected to be the fourth UK partner school of the prestigious Goethe Institut by the German Embassy.

Students and staff continue to contribute to local community science events and the school hosts science lectures for the local community. A programme of community lectures and participation in science festivals run by Exeter University and in Sidmouth continues.

The school works actively in the local Learning Community and with other Devon schools.

Financial Performance

In the current climate of uncertainty about future funding, Governors have made it a priority to ensure that high standards are maintained within the framework of a budget that is sustainable, and have been rigorous in evaluating any proposals for additional expenditure.

Last year's review of cash management has led to a further increase of £5,111 (19.8%) in investment income from short term deposits and other investments.

The Academy has used £141,874 from GAG funding and £30,517 from other restricted funds, in addition to capital grant funding received from the EFA, to purchase Fixed Assets to support the Academy's Educational Operations. The Academy was successful in gaining funding £1.27m for the refurbishment and extension of the Cottrill Hall under the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund (ACMF) scheme.

The school's own Site Team continue to undertake a wide range of maintenance and improvement works in-house, ensuring both high standards and value for money.

Financial Governance and Oversight

The school has in place robust and well-proven financial systems. As for previous years, the audit report for the year ending 31 August 2014 raised no issues of concern. Relevant policies and procedures are reviewed on at least an annual basis, and the Board is supported in its oversight by a Responsible Officer who makes a termly report.

The Board has in place a Best Value Policy which includes an annual Best Value Review focusing on at least one major area of school activity. In the period 2013/14, the Board received a Best Value Review on Support Staff Structure and Succession Planning. The area identified for investigation during the year was Income Generation.

Each year, the Governors' Training Evening held in January is given over to considering long budget plans, including a strong focus on benchmarking with similar schools. The Business Managers' Group in the South West Academic Trust have considered collaborative purchasing arrangements, and the school has collaborated with other schools in Devon on the purchase of Work Experience support.

Major service contracts reviewed during the year include payroll arrangements and new arrangements for in-house provision are in place for 2015 which will lead to both an improved service and savings of circa £2k per annum.

The Finance and Resources Committee and the Senior Leadership Team receive monthly financial management reports which analyse performance to date against budget. The Finance and Resources Committee review these reports at each meeting and take any appropriate action required where there are significant budget variations.

The Academy Trust have identified that the most serious threat to the school over the next few years is the impact of various changes in funding for both 11-16 and 16-19 education, which are likely to lead to very significant reductions in the revenue budget. A major focus in the year ending August 2014 has been on identifying cost savings. Examples include:

- Staff re-structuring - £74k per annum savings
- Dropping of Year 13 Games - £8.5k per annum savings
- Move from 4 year to 5 year IT replacement programme - £42k savings in 2014/15
- Salix loan for installation of energy saving lighting - £4.8k per annum savings

Governors continue to work actively, both to prepare strategically for these challenges and to lobby nationally and locally for a long term solution. Financial planning is focused on maintaining the breadth and quality of future teaching and learning in the context of diminishing budgets.

Signed: 

Name: Paul William Evans

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 11 December 2014