

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: Tarleton Academy

Academy trust company number: 07848372

Year ended 31 August 2013

I accept that as accounting officer of Tarleton 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.

Improving Educational Results and Targeted Improvement

The annual curriculum structure takes account of individual student progress, external standards and demands, quality of teaching and learning and available resources. For the past two years the Academy has streamlined its curriculum offer to focus more resources into core subjects, including time and staffing hours. In addition the academy has worked closely with teachers to ensure standards are high. This has resulted in some restructuring which has brought a fresh wave of new staff to complement the excellent staff already in place.

Teaching staff costs have reduced significantly as a result. Student attainment has risen by 12% for 5 A* to C in English and Mathematics over two years. Teaching and learning is now judged as typically good or outstanding in 95% of all lessons, compared to 47% two years ago. Attainment in subjects in the English Baccalaureate category has doubled and the number of vocational courses has reduced significantly and only remains for a small group of targeted individuals.

Focus on individual pupils

Resources that focus particularly on the needs of SEN students and students falling behind in their progress have been restructured. Teaching staff have been trained extensively to support SEN students within mainstream classrooms. This has allowed the diversion of SEN funding to the employment of an Intervention teacher with a primary school background together with an SEN specialism to work with small groups of students at Key Stage 3 with below age related expected attainment.

In addition, Pupil Premium funding has been used to introduce two Higher Level Teaching Assistants (English and Mathematics) for targeted intervention with students who are falling behind in their individual progress in these subjects.

Class sizes have been reduced across the curriculum particularly in years 9 to 11. During 2012/13 the average class size in years 9 to 11 was 21.

Despite reducing the curriculum by 112 teaching hours from the previous years, staff are deployed more efficiently and to maximum capacity.

Collaboration

Tarleton Academy has developed a significant partnership with Edge Hill University.

Middle leaders and the SEN Lead Teacher are seconded to Edge Hill University for a variety of school improvement projects which include the use of new technology, the development of specialist centre of science and a research project looking at maximising excellent behaviour for learning. The Academy has benefited from significant income into the Academy which has allowed working closely and collaboratively with an outstanding Higher Education Institution provider. In addition, the Academy has been heavily involved in the programme Future Teachers which was about exploring ways of accelerating teacher training which was predominately school based to ensure outstanding entrants to the profession.

Another element of collaboration with Edge Hill University Faculty of Education has been the significant increase in numbers of trainee teachers working closely with current teaching staff to carefully plan and deliver excellent lessons. The income generated from this venture has been reinvested in professional development for teaching staff. In addition, we have found that the Trainee Teachers have brought new ideas, up-to-date methodology, creativity and energy which has added to an already vibrant forward thinking staff.

The Academy worked closely with Edge Hill University to provide high quality Continuous Professional Development for specialist training for elements of SEN for example, ASD, literacy in modern language, research as a school improvement tool and improving teaching and learning in History and Geography. In addition, the Academy works closely with secondary school partners in South Ribble.

The Academy enjoys close relationships with primary partners locally, meeting regularly to share best practise, to explore common solutions to educational issues and to identify sources of funding streams for professional development. In the last year we have shared the services of a Behaviour Advisor and commissioned Edge Hill University to deliver collaborative speech and language development training for the cluster.

The Academy is a member of the Lancashire Academy Heads and Principals network which has regular meetings for Headteachers, School Business Managers and Clerks to the Governing Body. The Academy Business Managers meet regularly to discuss best practice and group purchasing opportunities for example a discounted rate was secured for a property management software package.

The Academy adopts robust tendering and competitive quotation procedures to ensure best value for money. It evaluates the provision of services and appraises the effectiveness of them for example the Academy has obtained an alternative and more cost effective provider for the support of Newly Qualified Teachers. The Academy has also undertaken the Crescent Purchasing Consortium process to determine the most appropriate insurance provider. In addition, during the year an evaluation was made about the Management Information System and its fitness for purpose and suitability for providing effective tracking information of pupil progress. The Academy renegotiated contracts in order to change provider.

The management of the Academy receive regular budget reports and areas of expenditure are regularly reviewed to identify where resources can be best utilised to achieve maximum impact.

New Initiatives

The Academy has been involved in a project with Edge Hill University and Promethean to explore the use of hand held learning response units and android tablets to improve instant feedback from individual students to accelerate progress and increase engagement. This has seen significant investment in hardware from our partners, the impact of which can be seen on attainment and progress throughout all year groups and levels of ability.

The Academy has restructured the school day with an earlier start and finish, a longer break and a shorter lunch. This has led to a breakfast club to encourage more students to have a good breakfast to increase energy levels and subsequent attainment. All Pupil Premium students are provided with a breakfast free of charge in addition to a free lunch.

A longer break time ensure that students who have skipped breakfast have time to use the facilities available to give them a much needed boost. A shorter lunch and earlier finish has also led to increased engagement in the one remaining afternoon lesson. This has resulted in a charge to the Academy to restructure one bus contract, but the impact on attainment has demonstrated value for money in terms of costs.

In September 2012 a new school uniform was introduced for all students, this was subsidised for Years 8 to 11 by the Academy to reduce the impact on families particularly for Year 11. It was important that this new identity was shared all students. The impact of this change has been overwhelming, not least from the local community who observe regularly to us how proud, smart and better behaved the students are locally. For the students it has generally raised their self-esteem and has focused their minds with a more professional air.

Improvement to Facilities

There have been a number of significant developments in the fabric of the Academy, the largest of these being a new building that houses six classrooms for English faculty. This was obtained through an Emergency Fund Bid to the Education Funding Agency. The project was completed within six months. Teaching and learning is further enhanced with an already outstanding faculty by bright spacious rooms and a genuine sense of pride on the part of the students.

The new build also houses a large intervention room for targeted small groups and one-to-one work. Despite the tight time scale the Academy utilised the experience and contacts from other Academy partners to pull together an outstanding team of contractors and consultants.

The Academy also secured a funding bid from the Education Funding Agency to have flat roofs replaced across the Academy, further improving the fabric of the building and allowing funds to be diverted for necessary repairs internally and externally that were in evidence from the previous gaps and leaks.

Former and current students will have been familiar with the claustrophobic dark classrooms of the Mersey Building. In the last year, two of the three floors have been opened up into four bright spacious newly decorated classrooms on each floor. This, with the addition of new technology has improved teaching and learning and it allows teachers to be more creative with the space and employ multi-sensory approaches. Student engagement has increased as a result which has in turn contributed to a significant rise in attainment at all levels.

Over the past year there has been significant investment with a new Management Information System, virtualisation of ICT network and the expansion of wireless connection. These projects were completed in Summer 2013 and we are confident that these investments will impact significantly on the tracking of individual student progress, speedy and personalised targeted intervention and much improved technological support of learning.

The Academy has over the last two years a renewed commitment to its responsibility to play an important role at the heart of the community beyond school hours. Over the year there has been steady increase in extended services provision, ensuring local residents and young people get involved in out of hours activity. The Academy has appointed an Extended Services Co-Ordinator and a Resources Development Manager to lead and drive the expansion. This culminated in, with the aid of funding from the Education Funding Agency, to provide a summer camp for two weeks during the summer break. Pupil Premium students from feeder primaries were specifically targeted, but the camp was opened up to a much wider participation group. This has aided transition for Year 6 students and whilst all of these activities has generated income, our principle aim is to provide a service to families within the community.

The Academy secured an interest free Salix loan to replace thermostats and lighting to improve energy efficiency with a view to the cost of the loan being covered by the savings made. This along with investment of replacement boilers in previous years has reduced the overall fuel bill significantly.

Signed:

Name: Lesley Gwinnett

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 3rd December 2013