

Value for Money Statement

Academy Trust Name: Willow Tree Academy

Trust company number: 09440025

Year ended 31 August 2015

I accept that as accounting officer of the Willow Tree Academy I am responsible and accountable for ensuring that the 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 (EFA) 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.

Value for Money Report

Over the last financial period, Willow Tree Academy has taken a wide range of steps to ensure that the education standards and levels of attainment for all pupils have continued to improve. From the last set of SATs results, published in August 2015, 82 % of Herringthorpe Junior School pupils achieved level 4 SATs and 89 % of Greasbrough Primary School pupils achieved level 4 SATs. This being in line with the national average.

Collaboration between the two schools increased the quality of teaching and learning at both sites and the targets for 2015 academic year see both schools achieving higher than the national average.

Increasing demand on budgets have focused the attention on providing the best education for our students at the lowest possible cost. We have worked hard in our first period as an academy trust to reduce costs wherever possible and increase all opportunities for income. Some of the initiatives are listed below.

- Improving education outcomes for all students across both schools and improving opportunities for all pupils This has been done by:
 - o Collaboration between both schools to development of effective curriculum to ensure students have access to a broad curriculum; including additional time for core subjects such as English and Maths for identified pupils. Curriculum leaders have worked together to enable key staff to be used across both school sites reducing spare teacher capacity whenever possible
 - o Robust data collections across both schools to ensure pupils are challenged and make effective progress.

- Reducing the cost of professional development of both teachers and support staff whilst increasing the quality of training opportunities for all staff. This has been done by;
 - o Joint in-house teacher training days (inset) incorporating teaching and support staff from both schools. This has given outstanding faculty leaders and heads of department opportunities to share good practice which has helped to deliver more effective lessons to the students of both schools. The cost of this initiative has reduced overall training and development costs across both sites.
- New initiatives were introduced during the period to reduce the overall costs to the budget at both schools. Some of these included:
 - o Obtaining insurance for both schools via a brokerage service to reduce the cost of insurance for buildings, contents, liability, school trips.
 - o Procuring energy costs at the lowest cost possible. This was done by joining the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) energy framework agreement which follows the transforming government procurement guidelines.
 - o Better purchasing power continues to be a priority for the trust. Both schools continue to use approved providers for goods and services who have a track record of providing value for money. One such company is YPO who work with a number of smaller suppliers to drive down costs which are then passed on to the public sector. YPO remains 100% publicly owned and sees all profits returned to the public sector.

In addition the trust has reviewed its ability to maximise income generation. This has been achieved by:

- Ensuring robust systems are in place to ensure the school census data provided to government is accurate
- Accessing external grants whenever possible such as Big Lottery Funding and grants provided by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Fund raising – each year students from both schools undertake a sponsored walk. Staff and trustees are always astonished by the generosity of parents/carers. The funds received are split between external charities and school fund. The school fund has provided funding for many projects including; new outside seating areas.

In a bid to provide greater value for money the trust will be developing the following initiatives to drive down costs in the next financial year.

- Providing in-house payroll facilities for all schools within the trust. This will save a significant amount of money over a period of time with a one off cost for implementation and training
- Looking at lease contracts currently held by both schools within the trust and consolidating these into one contract to further drive down costs.
- Looking at ways to communicate with parents/carers to reduce overall postage costs
- Sharing of assets between schools to prevent duplicate purchasing.
- Procurement of ICT goods and services across both schools to drive down costs.

There is a constant desire within the trust to improve through better systems that lead to better outcomes for pupils. Value for money is a key part of ensuring we are able to do this.

Signed:

Name: Mrs Jane Fearnley

Title: Accounting Officer

Date: 31/12/2015