

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: St John's Academy Trust

Academy trust company number: 08517255

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of St John's 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 have 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 Raising Achievement Plan (RAP) has focused on maintaining our high standards and continuing to improve. We continue to develop an inspiring creative curriculum, invest heavily in staff development and follow a rigorous monitoring schedule including regular pupil progress meetings. Coaching of all teachers is a key priority and we have released staff, including a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) to ensure this happens.

Staffing Structure – We keep our staffing structure under review and deploy staff efficiently to support an improved curriculum and highly effective quality first teaching. This year our Finance Manager and School Business Manager have combined their roles and are job-sharing the school business manager role. To support this role, both have enrolled for school business manager courses. Our Senior Leadership Team has included the Assistant Head and a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) who has been non-class based. Supply teacher costs are kept to a minimum as we are able to utilise our Personal Health Social Education (PHSE) and SEN coordinators when necessary. This also impacts in better standards for children as the cover staff know the children and school systems extremely well. All children benefit from a highly regarded Forest School programme with a dedicated Forest School teacher.

Focus on individual children – During 2013-14 our SENCo became non-class based and has been able to focus fully on provision for SEN, pupil premium children and to run the Common Assessment Framework, Team Around the Child and Team Around the Family meetings within the school. She has supported teachers in providing for pupils with specific needs and used regular Teaching Assistant (TA) meetings to provide training and development for TAs. She has also worked with specific groups such as the

more able readers in Year 6. The school employs an HLTA with a focus on nurturing. The work she does is tailored to individual pupils who need emotional or behavioural support. She also oversees 'Star Group', a nurturing programme focusing on building self-esteem of individual pupils. Our HLTA also provides cover for class teachers, ensuring children are taught by a familiar adult. In addition, the school buys into a home-school link worker service within the partnership and the work carried out by this member of staff provides support for families within the home.

Collaboration – As part of OPEN (Oxfordshire Primary Education Network) cost savings were generated through standard implementation of a financial system with the other schools, sharing implementation and training costs. All areas of the schools support each other through shared best practice, i.e. the office staff, governors, teachers and teaching assistants, through regular meetings and continued professional development. Head teachers of the schools support each other through a risk assessment process each year.

New Initiatives – New initiatives are embraced and the school incorporated a huge curriculum project (The Big Bang) into the budget. The head teacher, who left the school in April 2014, spoke nationally on the innovative St John's curriculum which brought additional revenue into the budget.

Quantifying improvements

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – Percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development in EYFS has improved from 40% in 2013 to 58.6% in 2014, (the national score was 60%). Attainment in Key Stage 1 (2014) is above national in all subjects for Level 2+, Level 2b+ and Level 3+. The majority of pupils achieved Age Related Expectations (ARE) and significant numbers were above ARE. Attainment in Key Stage 2 is in line with national results for Level 4 and 5 in reading and writing; with our Raiseonline report showing that the school's results are significantly above national for writing at Level 5+ . Results are lower in maths and this is being addressed through this year's RAP. In all other year groups progress is expected or better in the majority of subjects. Where there are weak areas in cohorts, these have been identified and weaknesses are being addressed.

Financial governance – The schools Financial Procedures ensure that all purchases are authorised as appropriate by budget holders, a school business manager, the head teacher, and Resources Committee and Full Governing Body when appropriate. The procedures also specify the number of quotes to be obtained and whether full tendering is required. We hold regular resources committee meetings, monthly budget monitoring and report regularly on cost savings. Governors provide challenge to the head teacher and school business managers regarding value for money. Cost centre holders are encouraged to purchase prudently, and only to meet the needs of daily life or the RAP.

Lessons learned - A new school office was built during summer 2013 and completed in October 2013. This has brought significant benefits to the school in enabling the office and school business managers to function more efficiently and providing space for meetings. However , due to time constraints and there being no school business manager in position at the planning stage of the project, the initial scoping of the project was not done as well as it could have been which lead to unexpected additional costs mainly in relation to electrical and data point installation. The school has learned lessons from this and it has been discussed with the Resources Committee.

Better purchasing - An existing member of staff has taken the position of part-time caretaker which has reduced costs in dealing with small maintenance issues and meant that issues are resolved much more promptly.

We have reviewed our IT support and changed suppliers setting up a contract which provides regular planned, rather than ad hoc, support. This enables IT services to function well and supports both learning and the curriculum and the ability of staff to carry out their roles effectively. This company has also supported development of our new website.

We have applied successfully for grants from the Academies Maintenance Fund to repair the school roof and replace windows and doors. Both projects have been completed and should reduce both maintenance and energy costs.

We have negotiated a new printer/copier contract within the school which has reduced costs and improved functionality.

Going forward we need to accelerate our programme of reviewing suppliers of all goods and services to achieve best value and through collaboration with other members of the OPEN umbrella trust to ensure economies of scale, where possible.

We also need to use benchmarking to see where savings can be made.

Income generation - We let our hall facilities on a regular basis and continue to look for new opportunities to expand this.

We have reviewed fees for our Breakfast and Afterschool Club to bring this in line with other local providers thus improving its profitability.

Signed:

Name:

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: