

# Value for Money Statement

**Academy trust name: Wickham School and Sports College (Academy Trust)**

**Academy trust company number: 07729766**

**Year ended 31 August 2014**

I accept that as accounting officer of **Wickham School and Sports College (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.

## **Student Achievement and Performance**

Student attainment was strong in 2014 and represented improvements on the results achieved in 2013 with good progress made towards the 2013 objectives set.

- Sixth Form attainment was particularly strong with students achieving a 100% pass rate at A2 and over 51% of final grades being either A\* or A in Year 13.
- 68% of students achieved 5+A\* -C including English and Maths.
- The percentage of A\* -A grades at GCSE increased by 2% to 19% overall.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and the rest of the school cohort in the achievement of 5+A\* -C including English and Maths continued to fall and was reduced to 27% in 2014.
- The AS pass rate improved by 12% to 91% and is now above the national average
- The percentage of A2 grades at A\* -A and A\* -B continued to rise and is in line with other secondary comprehensive schools nationally.
- Robust tracking systems are used to record all aspects of student data and their learning journey to ensure that support and interventions are purposeful and targeted to support with student progress.

- We focus on the differing needs of every individual student in our care and have developed monitoring structures and frameworks to support with a consistent assessment programme and policy with models of good practice for marking and providing consistent feedback for all our students.
- Our provision for Pupil Premium students has ensured the gap continues to close in all areas. This provides evidence that our interventions, such as one to one support, is having an impact. Use of the grant and its effectiveness is published annually on the Academy website.
- Outstanding educational outcomes enable our students to experience exciting opportunities. Around 70% of our students go onto Further or Higher education, many of them attending the Russell group universities, including Oxbridge. Others follow apprenticeship or direct employment routes.

### **Leadership and Management**

- Governors and senior managers challenge policy, procedure and finance proposals to ensure that proposals for change are effective, efficient and in the best interests of the school.
- We regularly review the staffing structure to ensure staff are efficiently deployed and are appropriately qualified and experienced specialists in their subject and support areas.
- The academy benchmarks itself against other schools of similar size, student numbers, staff numbers and costs whenever it can access the relevant information. The Academy is part of the Gateshead Business Manager Group where they meet to compare costs, share best practice and collaborate whenever possible.
- The voice of our Parents is important to us. In addition to parental consultation we operate a 'Parents Forum' to directly engage and involve parents and to actively gauge their opinion on key changes. The Parents' Forum meets each half term, the comments it provides informs our decision making process and creates a balance of opinion.

### **Financial Governance and Management**

- The Academy has a dedicated Finance, Staffing and General Purposes Committee. The committee meet to discuss priorities and consider the financial position of the Academy using the reports produced for them. Detailed budgets are set and financial monitoring takes place throughout the financial year which is validated through the Governor Audit Committee meetings. The Terms of

Reference clearly set out the levels of responsibility of the Members and Governors and its Officers and these are checked and monitored through annual audit inspections by KPMG the Academy Auditors.

- This year's recent Audit outcomes confirmed that the Academy comply with the terms and conditions as per the Education Funding Agencies Funding Agreement and the Academy Financial Handbook.
- Resources are purchased as per the school's financial procedures and these have been successfully validated by the Responsible Officer and KPMG, the Academy Auditors, as an Academy which is operating with Good Practice.
- The Academy actively explores opportunities to generate income through the hire of the Academy facilities while continuing to support community groups and primary partner schools to have access to the school facilities.
- The Academy invests in short term deposits, during low operational periods to ensure that the best interest rates are obtained from the Academy reserves.
- Contracts are appraised or renegotiated in a timely manner to get the best mix of quality and effectiveness and value for money.
- The Academy is a member of the group purchasing consortium which drives costs, savings and efficiencies by effective collaboration.
- A new commercial catering contract was procured April 2014, all food is now cooked fresh on-site each day and the quality of provision has been independently evaluated with a 96% out of a possible 100% rating. Environmental Health inspections warranted the highest of grading's with a 5\* for the kitchen facilities. The contract change brought significant investment to upgrade kitchen facilities and the dining experience for the students, along with a refurbished and rebranded Starbucks Café for the 6<sup>th</sup> form centre. A new modern biometric cashless catering system has been installed which now allows the cashless catering system to be linked to the schools online payment system.

## **Premises**

- The use of the school premises is regularly reviewed. We have a 5 step phased building development plan 2013 – 2017 with a focus to further develop the school site and bid for further Capital Funding.
- In 2014 we have applied for three separate capital funding bidding rounds. We are awaiting the outcome on two of the funding bids which if successful will secure the Academy with either a full or part building programme to regenerate our building stock.

- Service contracts are regularly reviewed and the Academy has identified and changed service contracts throughout the year in line with best value principles.
- We have invested in a Digital Media Centre to ensure the migration from paper to electronic services is fully supported. The benefits of an e-mature organisation will be that resources will be more readily available for staff and students on a 24/7 time clock. By reducing our paper and photocopying usage and utilising electronic resources value for money will be gained.

## **Health and Safety**

Governors, Academy Leaders and Managers review the quality of the academy environment with regular inspections of the school site in order to provide a safe working environment for students, staff and visitors. A Health and Safety external inspection was procured in May 2014 and the Academy were commended on many areas of excellence with an overall grading of 79%.

There were many areas of Good Practice where the school scored 100%. These were:

- Incident Reporting and Investigation
- Building and premises management
- Control of contractors
- Electricity
- Lifting operations and lifting equipment
- Fire and emergencies
- Occupational health
- Educational visits
- Occupational Road Risk (Minibuses)

The Academy benefit from an updated Health and Safety Action Plan to ensure that the safety of our students, staff and visitors is always at the forefront of our operational procedures.

Faculty risk assessments are reviewed annually and general risk and control measures are reviewed regularly through the Governors Health and Safety Audit Committee structures.

## **Collaboration and the wider Community**

The Academy works collaboratively with its feeder primary schools, the Local Authority, secondary schools and other academies in the area to share best practice and support.

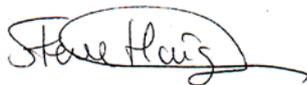
As part of this collaborative work we supplied bespoke ICT service to a primary partner school in 2014.

Whickham School have a fully staffed sports facility which is open 7 days a week. We currently offer the facilities and sports centre to local clubs and members of the public on evenings and weekends, including school holidays.

The Academy support with various charitable activities to ensure the staff and student charitable ethos and values are shared with the wider community and more disadvantaged groups. The students nominate a charity each year, in 2014 they chose FACT (Fighting All Cancers Together) and have raised significant funds to support the charity this year.

The Academy promotes independent study and leadership opportunities with the acclaimed Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, International Inspiration Programme, Arts Mark and World Challenge expeditions. We are very proud to hold the prestigious Arts Mark Gold Status, which offers a wide range of arts activities that students participate in both within and beyond the curriculum. Having access to all of these diverse opportunities are often life changing experiences for students. Universities and employers look for, and recognise, the importance of these experiences as valuable skill sets which bring the student's added value as they move on from Whickham School on their life journey.

**Signed:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Haigh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Name: S Haigh**

**Academy Trust Accounting Officer**

**Date: 19 December 2014**