

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: Darrick Wood School

Academy trust company number: 07393519

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Darrick Wood School 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.

The School's approach to gaining value of money was established in 2007.

Introduction

The governing body is accountable for the way in which the school's resources are allocated to meet the objectives set out in the School Development Plan. Governors need to secure the best possible outcome for pupils, in the most efficient and effective way, at a reasonable cost. This will lead to continuous improvement in the school's achievements and services.

What is Best Value?

Governors apply the four principles of best value:

- **Compare** – How does the school's pupil performance and financial performance compare with all schools? How does it compare with other Bromley secondary schools and does it compare with similar schools? Are we a relatively high performer? Do we cost more or less than others? Why?
- **Challenge** – Is the school's performance high enough? Why and how is a service provided? What is the evidence about level of need? What do parents want? Could someone else do it differently or better?
- **Consult** – How does the school seek the views of stakeholders about the services the school provides? What do they want the school to do? Are they happy with, or at, the school? What is in their best interests?
- **Compete** – How does the school secure efficient and effective services? Are services of appropriate quality? Are we providing services at the right cost? Could we or others provide them at a lower cost?

The Governors' Approach

The Governors and school managers always apply the principles of best value when making decisions about:

- The allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the School

- The targeting of resources to best improve standards and quality of provision
- The use of resources to best support the various educational needs of all pupils

Governors, and the school managers:

- Make comparisons with other/similar schools using data provided by the LA and the Government on the quality of teaching and learning, and levels of expenditure
- Challenge proposals, examining them for effectiveness, efficiency and cost, e.g. setting of annual pupil achievement targets, improving accommodation
- Require suppliers to compete on grounds of cost, and quality/suitability of services/products/backup, e.g. provision of new accommodation and refurbishment of rooms.
- Consult individuals and organisations on quality/suitability of service we provide to parents and pupils and of the services we receive from providers. Such feedback comes from questionnaires, parental consultations, pupils' reports, OFSTED and Architects.

Governors and school managers do not waste time and resources:

- on investigating minor areas where few improvements can be achieved
- to make minor savings in costs
- by seeking tenders for minor supplies and services

The pursuit of minor improvements or savings is not cost effective if the administration involves substantial time or costs.

Staffing

Governors and school managers deploy staff to provide best value in terms of quality of teaching, quality of learning, adult-pupil ratio, and curriculum management including effective use of the Pupil Premium.

Use of Premises

Governors and school managers consider the allocation and use of teaching areas, support areas and communal areas, to provide the best environment for teaching & learning, for support services, and for communal access to central resources, e.g. the school hall.

Use of Resources

Governors and school managers deploy equipment, materials and services to provide pupils and staff with resources which support quality teaching and learning.

Teaching

Governors and school managers review the quality of curriculum provision and quality of teaching, to provide parents and pupils with:

- A curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and Agreed RE Syllabus
- Teaching which builds on previous learning and has high expectations of pupils' achievement

Learning

Governors and school managers review the quality of pupils' learning, by cohort, class and group, to provide teaching which enables pupils to achieve at least nationally expected progress, e.g. setting of annual pupil achievement targets, and the setting of targets for GCSE examinations.

Purchasing

Governors and school managers maintain procedures for assessing need, and obtaining goods and services which provide "best value" in terms of suitability, efficiency, time and cost. Established practice includes:

- Competitive purchasing procedures (e.g. three quotations for goods and services above £5,000, and where appropriate at £2,500 for good business practice)
- Procedures for accepting "best value" quotes, which are not necessarily the cheapest (e.g. suitability for purpose and quality of product)
- Procedures which minimise administrative time by the purchase of goods or services direct from known, reliable suppliers (e.g. stationery, small equipment)

Pupils' Welfare

Governors and school managers review the quality of the school environment and the school ethos, in order to provide a supportive environment conducive to learning and recreation.

Health & Safety

Governors and school managers review the quality of the school environment and equipment, carrying out risk assessments where appropriate, in order to provide a safe working environment for pupils, staff and visitors.

Sustaining Best Value for Money

These areas are monitored and evaluated for best value by:

Regular Checks

1. In-house monitoring by the Head Teacher, and the Senior Managers, e.g. classroom practice, work sampling
2. Whole School monitoring and review of procedures by the Senior Leadership Team
3. Head Teacher's weekly meeting with Business Manager
4. Visits by the External Auditor
5. Visits by the Responsible Officer
6. Business Manager's termly report to the Governors
7. Governors' committee meetings
8. Governors' full termly meetings
9. Governors' Finance Meetings

Annual Checks

1. Annual Performance Management of all staff.
2. Annual Budget Planning

3. Analysis of school pupil performance data, e.g. end of Key Stage Tests, GCSE /A Level results, LA schools, similar schools
4. Analysis of LA pupil performance data of all schools
5. Analysis of financial data, e.g. benchmark data for LA schools, and similar schools
6. Analysis of Department for Education pupil performance data, e.g. RAISEonline
7. School Improvement Planning

Periodic Checks

1. OFSTED Inspection Report

Commentary

Ofsted judged achievement and standards of pupils at the School as outstanding in 2009. This position has been maintained and progress checks on current pupils in Years 11 and 13 predict results to be amongst the School's best. The 2014 GCSE results remain significantly above the national average and the Advanced Level results were the highest in the School's history. In addition, outstanding School attendance (96.3%), no permanent exclusion of pupils, and only 5 temporary exclusions offer further evidence of value for money. The School Development Plan and a focus on the achievement of individual pupils has led to improvements.

Monthly meetings of the Governors' Finance Committee illustrate continuous financial monitoring and timely reporting and the positive reports received from both auditors and the independent Responsible Officer demonstrate sound, internal spending controls and financial records are both accurate and up-to-date. In spite of very substantial cuts from Government funding, the School has maintained a positive balance in its budget. Improved value for money has been secured through the School's energy supply broker, through installation of some solar panels and from substantial discounts in the acquisition of IT hardware. Provision of support at other schools and through our Teaching School status has offered valuable professional development for our members of staff and also generated income for Darrick Wood. We also secured a grant of £370,732 to install a 3G pitch, replacing a badly worn all-weather pitch.

All surplus cash balances are invested in interest bearing accounts to maximise income generation.

Lessons Learned

The EFA administration of the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund makes it difficult to plan for capital works.