

Value for Money Statement

Academy Trust Name: Middleton Academy Ltd

Academy Trust Company No.: 6246929

Year Ended: 31 August 2014

I accept that as Accounting Officer of **Middleton Academy Ltd** 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.

Educational Results

St Anne's Academy is committed to improving the education and future life chances of its students, mainly from the local community of Middleton. As a Faith Academy, St Anne's has strong Christian Ethos and values which underpin the inclusive nature of the Academy and all its achievements.

In September 2013, the Academy was in its seventh year of operation and continues to strive to achieve full capacity in terms of student numbers. Total students in the year ended 31st August 2014 numbered 678 with available places for 900 students including the Sixth Form.

Examination results for 2014 were disappointing but not totally unexpected in the light of significant and ongoing Government Curriculum Reform changes and severe adjustments in Examination Grade boundaries in June 2014. Further information relating to the impact of these changes on all schools can be found in the 'DfE Statistical First Release' document issued on 23 October 2014:

- At GCSE 33% of students achieved 5 or more GCSE passes at A* - C level including English and Mathematics [2013 = 46%];
- 45% of students made expected progress in English [2013 = 66%];
- 43% of students made expected progress in Mathematics [2013 = 64%];
- At A Level, all 12 students who wished to progress to University obtained University places for a wide range of courses.

Throughout 2013/14 interventions and resources were used in a carefully structured and targeted programme of learning activities designed to support students to achieve *their personal* targets and predicted grades. As a direct result of the 2014 Examination Results, a specific Action

Plan for the Class of 2015 has been implemented in order to improve educational outcomes next year.

In order to ensure that standards are continually raised, the Academy has a robust Strategic Development Plan. This was discussed with Governors on a termly basis throughout 2013/14 in order to review progress, measure impact and ensure that resources are being used effectively.

The Academy had a successful external SIAMS Inspection in October 2013 which rated the Academy as Good in all four categories. This followed an equally successful Ofsted Inspection in May 2013 which also rated the Academy as a Good School.

An Annual External Review of Teaching and Learning within the Sixth Form also took place in January 2014 in order to validate the Academy's own evaluation of Sixth Form data. The Annual External Reviews are used to evaluate a specific aspect of Teaching and Learning and ensure that resources are being used efficiently and effectively.

There is a relentless drive to improve standards embedded within the culture of St Anne's Academy. Examples of established programmes and measures designed to continually raise educational standards at the Academy are as follows:

- Assessment of all students at entry and at all Key Stages including Post 16 to assess added value
- Comprehensive student tracking systems to monitor levels of progress throughout the curriculum
- Extensive use of internal and external data analysis to support improvement
- Strategic Working Groups to develop and improve educational standards, teaching and learning, attendance and behaviour, faith and community involvement and pastoral care for all our students
- Staff development through Appraisal in conjunction with a robust Professional Development Programme
- Regular lesson observations of all Teaching Staff
- External verification visits from School Improvement Partners

The Academy Curriculum is designed to give all students a broad and balanced experience throughout KS3 and continues to provide a wide choice of different pathways at KS4 and KS5. The Sixth Form offers a wide variety of academic and vocational courses to meet the needs of our students and support their progress towards Further Education and future employment.

Targeted Improvement

Examples of targeted improvement measures in place during 2013/14 to support our students and improve attainment are as follows:

- A robust Attendance tracking and monitoring system including rewards and data analysis has resulted in improved attendance from 91.3% in 2011 to 93.9% in 2014 with a corresponding reduction in the level of persistent absenteeism from 15.5% in 2011 to 7.8% in 2014.
- Intervention groups to support student progress operate throughout the curriculum, focussing particularly on English, Maths and Science.
- The Academy Staffing Structure is designed to support improvement and the varied curriculum on offer is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets both the needs of the Academy students and the wider National agenda.

Focus on Individual Students

The Academy takes great pride in meeting the needs of our students as individuals, both in terms of their education and their Pastoral Care. Pastoral Care at the Academy was judged to be Outstanding by Ofsted in May 2013 and by SIAMS in October 2013:

- “This is a very inclusive Academy. Every student is equally valued and well cared for through the Academy's outstanding pastoral care systems” [Ofsted May 2013].
- “The outstanding pastoral system, with a deep Christian concern for each individual student, supports the most vulnerable students through planned interventions, enabling many to remain in education.” [SIAMS October 2013].
- The Academy Pastoral Team provides comprehensive support to families as and when there is a need; with some families support is ongoing.
- The Additional Needs Team led by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator [SENCO] assesses, supports and tracks progress of identified students to ensure that students with additional needs reach their full potential. The Learning Support Manager provides targeted individual learning support to students within the Learning Support Unit.
- Robust intervention strategies and monitoring systems are in place to identify and provide tailored support to individual students. This may include withdrawal groups or 1:1 support within the Learning Support Unit and/or Behaviour Support Unit.
- Approximately 70% of the Academy student population from Year 7 to Year 11 inclusive attract Government Pupil Premium funding. This is a significant funding stream for the Academy; £366k in 2013/14 [£302k in 2012/13] and Pupil Premium is used effectively and in a strategic, targeted fashion to provide maximum benefit to those students who require additional support. Current priorities for Pupil Premium funding include the areas listed below. Further details regarding Pupil Premium expenditure are reported separately within the Academy website :
 - Additional Teaching Assistant support in English and Maths
 - Additional Staffing within the Learning Support Team
 - Staffing within the Inclusion Team

- Family, Social Concern and Intervention Programme
 - Attendance Intervention Programme
 - Faith and Community Programme
 - Resources and initiatives to improve Literacy across the Academy
 - 'Narrowing the Gap' Programme costs: costs of resources to improve student attainment in external Examinations
 - Personalised intervention costs, such as 1:1 Behaviour Mentoring Support
 - Culture and Leisure costs, such as educational visit costs including transport.
- Effective use of Government and Academy Bursaries to support Sixth Form students in their studies and to support and nurture students in any Year Group with an individual skill or talent which could potentially improve their future life chances or educational outcomes.
 - A Co-ordinator has been appointed to focus on high achieving students and provide strategies and support to subject leaders in helping these students achieve four levels of progress.
 - Support Staff roles within the Sixth Form continue to provide the maximum benefit and support to our students and their families.
 - Teaching Assistants and other Educational Support Staff are used effectively to support individual students or small intervention groups throughout the curriculum.
 - Student Leadership opportunities have developed significantly during the past three years with a clearly defined Student Leadership Structure including Prefects, Student Council, Sports Captains, Form Captains, Assertive and Peer Mentoring programmes.
 - Extra-curricular activities and events including Faith and Community, Sport, Performing Arts, Science, Summer School and Holiday Revision Classes provide additional experiences and opportunities for students in safe settings.
 - The Academy Social Concern Group, working with the Pastoral Team and Strategic Faith Team, supports individual students and their families within the local community during difficult times in their lives through emotional and practical support and fund-raising when appropriate.
 - Provision of a high quality in-house catering service led by a Chef Manager ensures that nutritional meals are served at an affordable price for the local community. The Catering Team communicates effectively with Pastoral and Additional Needs Staff to ensure that the individual dietary requirements of vulnerable students are accommodated.

Collaboration

In 2013/14, the Academy has engaged with other local education providers, national organisations and specialists to share best practice, receive advice and guidance and to improve standards in a cost effective manner. These organisations include local schools and colleges,

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, Rochdale Schools Forum, Manchester Diocese, Education Business Solutions, REAL Trust, Durham Education Services, PiXL and other sources of targeted staff training courses.

New Initiatives

In September 2012, the Sixth Form Curriculum was extended to include a Hair & Beauty Course [NVQ Level 2] in order to provide additional vocational options in order to meet the needs of our students. This involved internal refurbishment at a cost of £84k plus one additional member of staff with appropriate qualifications. The Hair & Beauty Salon was extremely well received in 2012/13 and 10 students progressed through the combined Hair and Beauty qualification between September 2012 and November 2013.

Further development of the Sixth Form Vocational Area and Curriculum was approved by the Governing Body in March 2013 to facilitate the delivery of new Sixth Form vocational courses including Hospitality and Catering, and a Level 3 Beauty qualification.

Internal refurbishment took place during July and August 2013 which included a relocated Learning Resource Centre [LRC] and Sixth Form Study/Social Area together with a relocated IT room for Sixth Form Vocational Courses.

This work was completed for the 2013/14 academic year at a cost of £288k. The Academy funded both stages of the Sixth Form Development for 2013/14 from its own resources.

Following the increase in Vocational offer within the Sixth Form, a Catering & Hospitality Co-ordinator and Teacher of Beauty Therapy were appointed in September 2013.

Financial Governance and Oversight

As Accounting Officer I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness and the operation of the systems of internal controls, financial management and reporting requirements at St Anne's Academy. I am also responsible for ensuring regularity, propriety and Value for Money in the use of the Academy's funds ensuring Best Value is obtained.

In my review of the financial control systems in operation I have been assisted in forming my opinion and taken guidance and assurance from the following areas:

- The work of both the Internal and External Auditors for the Academy [Baker Tilly Ltd];
- The work and advice of the Academy Finance Team;
- Advice and guidance from the Audit Governor; and,
- Guidance, discussion, challenge and review by the Assets Committee. Membership of the Assets Committee comprises a very experienced Community Local Councillor [Chair], Sponsor Governor Businessman and two former Headteachers; one, a recent appointment to the Trust for 2013/14 from an outstanding school.

The internal financial control system of the Academy is based on a framework of regular management information, reports, policies and procedures. Review of internal financial

controls is conducted on a continuous basis supported by recommendations and suggested best practice from Internal and External Audit findings which are reported to the Assets Committee via the Audit Governor.

The system of internal financial control is underpinned by a Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations Manual which set out the system of delegated authority and accountability. In particular it includes:

- Comprehensive budget monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial management reports reviewed in detail by the Assets Committee and agreed by the Governing Body;
- Strategic budget forecasting in line with the Academy's Strategic Plan for the current year plus three further years;
- Monthly financial reports detailing actual spend against budgeted spend with narrative explanation;
- Clearly defined procurement (asset purchase, capital investment and disposal) guidelines;
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties; and,
- Identification and management of risk.

Better Purchasing: Procurement

All contracts are reviewed or renegotiated in a timely manner to obtain the best mix of quality and effectiveness. Where it is of benefit to the Academy, and there is an obvious reduction in associated administrative and procurement costs, contracts are awarded for a period of three years or more. This has been of particular benefit in the awarding of contracts for Insurance, ICT Managed Service Provision and Audit Services.

The largest part of the Academy's expenditure is on salaries. The Academy observes National Pay Agreements and ensures that salaries paid are fair, competitive, cost effective and affordable.

Quotations and formal tender exercises are undertaken for goods and services provided to the Academy in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation to ensure that higher value contracts are procured at prevailing market rates and appraised fairly using consistent criteria from potential suppliers.

Where possible the analysis of historic data is used to indicate trends and highlight areas of expenditure to review.

The Governors and Strategic Leadership Team apply the principles of Best Value to develop the Academy Strategic Plan. This is used to determine and make informed decisions about:

- Allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the Academy
- Targeting resources to improve standards and the quality of provision
- Use of resources to meet the individual needs of our students

In determining the priority of options, consideration is given to achieving Best Value through a combination of open competitive procurement procedures, consideration of cost to benefit of an activity, the use of alternative resources, the locality of suppliers and the suitability of goods and services for the identified activity.

The Academy takes the opportunity to work collaboratively with others and gain access to group discount, where possible. Use of supplier networks available such as Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation and Foodservice Options allows the Academy to benefit from economies of scale.

Better Income Generation

The Academy explores opportunities to generate income through the hire of the Academy premises and facilities. A total of £12k was earned in Lettings fees during 2013/14.

During 2013/14 the Academy continued to invest surplus resources in a mix of Guaranteed Fixed Deposit Bank Accounts and other interest bearing Bank Deposit Accounts however in October 2013 the Governing Body agreed to invest the Academy's Endowment Funds into a specific Investment Fund dealing in blue chip companies only with the aim of improving the rate of return on surplus resources whilst minimising any potential risks to the Academy.

Reviewing Controls and Managing Risks

The Assets Committee meets at least four times per year and receives financial reports, budget forecasts and risk management related documents within its remit. The Governing Body approves the budget recommended by the Assets Committee and ensures that the Academy is living within its means and remains a 'going concern'. The Governing Body also approves the Final Accounts and Auditors' Management Letter on an annual basis.

The Academy appointed an Audit Governor responsible for reviewing the risks to internal financial control and the reporting of Internal and External Audit findings to the Assets Committee and the Governing Body. Baker Tilly Ltd [previously RSM Tenon Ltd] was re-appointed as both Internal and External Auditors for the Academy following a competitive procurement exercise in May 2013. Baker Tilly Ltd operate the Internal and External functions as separate divisions within the company to avoid conflict of interest therefore different teams of Audit staff complete the Internal and External Audits and subsequent reporting to the Academy throughout the year.

Risk Management issues are reviewed regularly and risks are documented within the Academy Risk Register. Actions, policies and procedures are used to minimise foreseen risks. Insurance is in place to provide cover for unforeseen risk and to minimise foreseeable risk as appropriate. Regular reviews of insurance levels take place to manage risk cost effectively.

The Governing Body reviews the level of Academy reserves on an annual basis. Strategic planning and regular review of activities helps to identify trends and underlying movements in expenditure. The Governing Body has identified that the appropriate level of reserves to be

held by the Academy should be sufficient to provide enough working capital to cover any delays between expenditure and the receipt of grant funding, provide sufficient available monies to meet any unexpected emergencies and to compensate for fluctuations in student numbers.

Lessons Learned

In order to maximise the options and affordable opportunities for Academy students, the following strategies were applied in 2013/14:

1. Continued strategic, planned decision making using data to target resources, where possible.
2. Regular evaluations of outcomes to ensure that investment of Academy resources was effective and provided maximum return, both in terms of student attainment and financial cost.
3. Monthly monitoring and analysis of Academy income and expenditure to identify and act upon emerging trends.
4. Adaptation of future budget forecasts in light of changing circumstances in order to make informed strategic longer term decisions. As an example, in July 2014 the Academy updated its Funding Agreement in July 2014 in order to maximise available resources for students.

Signed: 

Name: Caroline Preece

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 18 December 2014