

Value for Money

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: Ironstone Academy Trust

Company number: 9040348

Year ended: 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Ironstone 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.

Improving Educational Results:

We have ensured that resources are directed where they are most needed and most effective in meeting educational requirements, for example by:

Targeting resources in line with the School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities, including:

- Implementation of a range of strategies which have enabled teachers to develop their professional expertise, improving outcomes for all children and especially for those pupils who attract Pupil Premium funding or risk of underachieving.
- Recruitment of two coaches responsible for the development of high quality sport and PE in Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Deployment of a specialist TA to effectively support the increasingly complex emotional needs of the pupil community.
- Implementing initiatives to ensure pupils' learning is based in a dynamic and challenging curriculum, engenders a 'growth mindset' and is differentiated to meet individual needs.
- Developing the Personal, Social and Health provision for all children through the continued involvement of the school in the United Nations Rights of the Child programme and as a Department of International Development Lead School for Global Education
- Ensuring the school is prepared for the implementation of the new curriculum, including new ways of assessing pupil progress by developing the assessment, tracking and monitoring processes to ensure data is used to inform planning, target interventions and support differentiation, including regular Key Stage, Senior Leadership Team and Governors meetings to review progress and impact of interventions for different groups of pupils, supported by more focused and robust Pupil Progress Standards Meetings.
- Further refining staff Performance Review and Appraisal processes for effective monitoring of performance aligned to school priorities and professional development areas.
- The effectiveness of these strategies can be seen in improved pupil outcomes, staff observations and PR
- The school has evidence of growing partnerships for improvement with other schools and agencies, involving staff at all levels in system leadership for example NCTL, NLE, School Business Management, Governor Support, Teaching Assistant development; this commitment has an impact on attainment.
- The school was externally assessed in Spring 2014; it is now a National Support School. We are a strategic partner in a Teaching School Alliance.
- Local Authority external moderation of EYFS, Y1 phonics check and Key Stage 1 testing assessment in 2014 supported our accurate judgments.

- Key Stage 2 moderation was undertaken with other Primary and Secondary Schools/ Academies and all assessments agreed.
- The Head Teacher is a National Leader of Education and a trainee OfSTED Additional Inspector.

Key Data

Is the school above the DfE Floor Standards? Yes

Progress from KS1 to KS2 :

- In 2014 97% (62/65) of our Pupils made two full Levels progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in Reading, with 67% who made 3 levels progress.
- 94% (17/18) pupils who attract Pupil Premium made 2 levels progress and 13/18 pupils (72%) made 3 levels progress.
- In 2014 97% (62/65) of our Pupils made two full Levels progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in Writing, with 28% making 3 levels progress.
- 100% of pupils who attract Pupil Premium made 2 full levels progress and 22% (4/18) made 3 levels of progress.
- In 2014 94% (17/18) of our pupils made two full Levels progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in Maths, with 44% (8/18) making 3 levels of progress.

Financial Governance and Oversight

- Our governance arrangements include regular monitoring by the Board of Directors and its committees, including the Finance and Audit Committee. They receive regular financial reports and ask relevant questions as evidenced in the minutes.
- There is an experienced finance specialist as Chair of the Board of Directors.
- The work of these committees is further informed by regular Responsible Officer reports, from Anderson Barrowcliff Accountants.

Better Purchasing

Examples of steps taken to ensure value for money when purchasing include:

- Exploring alternative purchasing options both online and direct through suppliers to find the best value.
- Working with other local schools in partnership to identify products and services that can be procured across a number of schools in order to drive down cost and/or negotiate favourable rates e.g. assessment data systems, maintenance and H&S contracts
- Implementing a tender process for significant purchases and/or contracts, for example a catering contract, the IT and Broadband refresh.

The School Bursar has been influential in driving down costs through better procurement and negotiation throughout 2013/14, including catering, property management, school insurances, residential trip costs. All contracts are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they are fit for purpose and best value. For example catering, cleaning, grounds maintenance. Better income generation has been secured through the revision of our Terms of Letting.

Examples of steps to maximise income include

A range of school staff providing consultancy services to other local schools and the Local Authority. Hosting 12 trainee teachers, including SCITT and Degree entrants to the profession.

The school's banking arrangements ensure that where cash flow allows, monies are transferred into a higher interest account.

Reviewing Controls and Managing Risks

The Finance and Audit Committee, School Bursar, budget holders and the Senior Leadership Team have reviewed regular budget reports, including future recommendations. This has ensured that spending is within budget and forward plans are agreed and implemented when there has been any variance. Actions taken to manage risk include the purchase of an appropriate level of insurance cover, following consultation with the school Local Authority. Professional advice (for example from the HR and legal service providers) has also been sought when needed.

Future Objectives

We recognise the need to continue developing relationships with other academies and local schools, in order to benefit from economies of scale in procuring products and services, developing staff and sharing knowledge, skill and expertise.

Name: Mr Carl Faulkner
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 17 Dec 2014