

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: St Thomas More High School

Academy trust company number: 07696989

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of St Thomas More High 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.

1. Economic, efficient and effective use of resources to produce better educational results:

This is demonstrated by the results for 2013/2014 academic year. Full details available on the Academy website: www.st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk.

The Academy has developed and has fully embedded tracking systems for individual students and provides a range of targeted interventions that track levels of progress from Key Stage 2 through to Post 16 and beyond. As a result the Academy has significantly improved student progress and attainment in many aspects as compared with last year.

% achieving 5 or more A* - C including English and Maths is 2% above the national average.

Average Capped Point score (Best 8 subjects) is 324.4 compared with 306.9 nationally, which is significantly above the national average.

% achieving 5 or more A* - G is remains significantly above the national average for the second consecutive year.

When compared like for like (boys vs boys) attainment in English, Maths, Science, Languages and Humanities are all at or above national; in Maths significantly so.

Key stage 2 to Key stage 4 value added scores for Best 8 including English and Maths show us in the 28% percentile and significantly above the national average. When compared like for like (boys vs boys) our value added measure of 1015.1 is significantly above the national value of 988.9. the gap between FSM and non-FSM students has also closed rapidly and our FSM and disadvantaged children make better progress than similar children nationally, closing the gap rapidly with those other pupils nationally.

Performance in Maths: expected progress in Maths is significantly better in this school compared with national figures for boys only.

Performance in English; expected progress in English has improved and is now above the national average (for boys) but this difference is not yet significantly.

2. Robust governance and oversight of Academy Trust finances:

The Headteacher with the Finance & General Management Committee ensures all staff adheres to the correct financial procedures for the Academy.

The financial running of the school is regularly audited by an Internal Auditor who reviews key financial policies, systems and procedures, including the use of tenders and presents reports on compliance to the Finance and General Management Committee each term. The Academy receives support throughout the year from its External Auditors on compliance and accounting practices. The external auditors conduct an annual audit prior to the production of the annual company accounts. Any recommendations are acted upon to continually improve the provision. The Headteacher receives monthly monitoring reports and the Trustees approve the budget each year and are mindful of the need to balance expenditure against income to ensure the Academy Trust remains a 'going concern'. The Trust also receives and approves the Annual Accounts and the External Auditors Management Report.

Regular reports are provided for the Governors, and we are fortunate to have Governors from a financial background on our Finance Committee who act as critical friends. The Governors also attend regular training to ensure that they can support the school as fully as possible.

3. Focus on individual pupils:

The Leadership and Management team track, through detailed analysis of individual pupils, the progress and needs of every child. We have a staffing structure that celebrates collaborative working styles. The Pupil Support Mentors and Pupil Progress Mentors meet weekly with the Assistant Heads, Pupil Support Coordinator and full time SEND Coordinator who is responsible for the children across the school with special educational needs and ensures inclusive practice for everyone. The team have detailed provision mapping to ensure children with specific needs are receiving the appropriate intervention. The work of this group continues to focus on closing the gaps in attainment and progress between our pupils.

The Director of Teaching and Learning is leading the accelerated reading programme using the catch up money to target, track and improve the reading ages of our pupils. With the Director of Learning i/c Pupil Progress students have been paired with student reading buddies to read aloud and the improvement in reading ages is being tracked. The Senior Leadership Team are regularly monitoring this group which consists of the Literacy Co-ordinator to ensure funding is appropriately directed and having a positive impact on achievement.

4. Ensuring the operation of the Trust demonstrates good value for money and efficient and effective use of resources:

The Academy regularly benchmarks financial performance against other academy trusts to demonstrate that the Trust provides good value for money.

Tender exercises are regularly undertaken to ensure that high value contracts are assessed against the marketplace on a regular basis to ensure that long term contracts (3 to 5 years) remain competitive.

For purchases above £15,000, but below the tender limit, 3 quotes are required.

5. Maximising income generation:

The Academy explores opportunities to generate income through hire of Academy facilities. Income is also generated from small grant applications which help to support the wider curriculum.

6. Reviewing controls and managing risks:

The Academy Senior Leadership Team review expenditure within each budget heading annually and make adjustments based on the effectiveness of strategies introduced in previous years, curriculum offer and any new strategies identified in the Academy Development Plan.

The Academy Trust works with other schools collaboratively to ensure that procurement costs are kept to a minimum.

7. Lessons learned:

Following appraisal of previous strategies, the Trust is looking carefully at staffing costs, curriculum design and the Pupil Premium Grant and the impact of these on outcomes for all our young people. The Academy has assessed various options and has now introduced a cashless system September 2014. Collaboration has shown that economies of scale can be achieved in optimising funding and every opportunity will be taken to improve collaboration where there are clear benefits – financial, pastoral or educational – which can be garnered.

Signed:

Name: Mrs G Ackred

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: