

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: Gilmorton Chandler Church of England Primary School

Company number: 8540699

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Gilmorton Chandler Church of England Primary 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 governing body is accountable for the way in which the school's resources were allocated to meet the objectives set out in the school's development plans.

Governors and the school leadership team secured the best possible outcome for pupils, in the most efficient and effective way, at a reasonable cost by applying the four principles of best value:

- Challenge - Is the school's performance high enough? Why and how is a service provided? Do we still need it? Can it be delivered differently? What do parents / carers want?
- Compare - How does the school's pupil performance and financial performance compare with all schools? How does it compare with local authority schools? How does it compare with similar schools?
- Consult - How does the school seek the views of stakeholders about the services the school provides?
- Compete - How does the school secure efficient and effective services? Are services of appropriate quality, economic?

This approach by the Governors and the school leadership team was necessary to secure improvement in the school's achievements and services. The principles of best value were applied 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 the quality of provision;
- the use of resources to best support the various educational needs of all pupils.

Governors, and the school leadership team:

- made comparisons with other/similar schools using data provided by the LA and the DfE;
- challenged proposals, examining them for effectiveness, efficiency, and cost;
- required suppliers to compete on grounds of cost, and quality/suitability of services/products/backup;
- consulted individuals and organisations on quality/suitability of service provided to parents and pupils, and services received from providers.

Governors and the school leadership team:

- did not waste time and resources on investigating minor areas where few improvements could be achieved
- did not waste time and resources to make minor savings in costs
- did not waste time and resources by seeking tenders for minor supplies and services

The pursuit of minor improvements or savings was not cost effective as the administration would have involved substantial time or costs. Time wasted on minor improvements or savings could also have distracted management from more important or valuable areas.

Improving educational outcomes for our pupils: This remains our key priority. The academy is committed to supporting our pupils achieving their full potential through academic achievement, extra-curricular opportunities and extended learning to develop the whole child and to help prepare them for the next stage of their educational life.

The effectiveness of our strategies can be seen in our end of Key Stage Two results:

Reading: Level 4+ 100%; Level 5 76%

Writing: Level 4+ 97%; Level 5+ 48%

GPS: Level 4+ 83%; Level 5+ 55%; Level 6 3%

Mathematics: Level 4+ 90%; Level 5+ 59%; Level 6 14%

Targeted improvement: The Academy has a robust tracking system for monitoring attainment and progress and is continually looking at how data can inform staff in order for them to support and extend the learning of the pupils.

Focus on individual pupils: Pupils benefit from one to one tuition, small group tuition and support, and where appropriate, our experienced team work with pupils to support their individual needs. The Academy rewards excellence, attendance and encourages positive behaviour. We celebrate achievement and encourage pupils to try new activities to develop their confidence. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that is based on learning through first hand experience. We fully recognise that pupils' skills and knowledge are diverse, and that at times it is necessary to differentiate the curriculum in order to make the most appropriate use of resources to meet pupils' needs.

Collaboration: We are a National Support School, work closely with primary and secondary colleagues from Lutterworth Area Schools Association and are a strategic partner with Affinity Teaching School Alliance.

New initiatives: We trialled a new curriculum and assessment procedures and increased our use of small group tuition and enrichment activities whilst continuing to live within our means.

Quantifying improvements: Challenging targets are set to ensure all our children make the maximum amount of progress that they can during the time that they are with us – in terms of educational achievement, attendance and behaviour.

Financial governance and oversight: The Academy's Governing Body has strong oversight of the financial management of the budget. The Business Management Committee meet regularly to review the financial position, to receive reports and to challenge decisions. Our external auditors review our financial processes and an internal audit tests our internal controls annually. The levels of delegation on spending proposals ensure we take the necessary steps to achieve best value. The Full Governing Body approves the budget each year and is mindful of the need to balance expenditure against income to ensure the Academy Trust remains a 'going concern'. All Governors and members of staff co-ordinating cost centres are required to complete a Register of Pecuniary Interests form annually. In addition, all governors are required to declare interest in agenda items at all meetings of governors.

Better purchasing: We are continuously looking for the most competitive deals using various procurement tools such as internet shopping, advice from other schools and economies of scale. For example, we bought into governor development services as a group of schools to achieve a 10% reduction in costs and more personalised / bespoke governor training opportunities. Maintenance consultants (YMD Boons) are employed to advise on the maintenance of the school buildings and on any large scale refurbishment of the school premises.

Fitness for purpose: The Academy has a cycle of review for its on-going services from external organisations to ensure these services continue to meet the needs of the school, are the best available to us at that time, and offer good value for money.

Benchmarking: Annually, the Academy benchmarks financial performance against similar schools to demonstrate the Academy Trust provides good value for money.

Options appraisal: Different options are considered before making large purchases. For example, an operational leasing arrangement was entered into to replace old, ineffective interactive whiteboards with large smart televisions. The costs and benefits over the longer term were considered and tenders sought accordingly.

Economies of scale: See above comments in better purchasing and options appraisal.

Better income generation: Significant funds are attracted when the services of the headteacher (National Leader of Education) and assistant headteacher (Specialist Leader of Education) are deployed. In addition the licence of the before and after school child care facility was fully reviewed.

Reviewing controls and managing risk: The school has robust policies and procedures in place to review controls and manage risk. These are at both school leadership and governance level. There is a robust segregation of duties with financial controls. Monthly financial monitoring reports are produced and each term, detailed reports are analysed by the Business Management Committee. Governors challenge decisions makers within the Academy on the cost and effectiveness of spending proposals in order to achieve value for money.

Staffing: The staffing structure of the Academy was reviewed. The governors and the school leadership team

deployed staff to provide best value in terms of quality of teaching, quality of learning, adult-pupil ratio, and curriculum management.

Use of premises: The governors and the school leadership team considered the allocation and use of teaching areas, support areas and communal areas, to provide the best environment for teaching and learning, for support services, and for communal access to central resources.

Use of resources: The governors and the school leadership team deployed equipment, materials and services to provide pupils and staff with resources which supported quality of teaching and quality of learning.

Teaching: The governors and the school leadership team reviewed the quality of the curriculum provision and the quality of teaching, providing parents / carers and pupils with:

- a curriculum which met the requirements of the National Curriculum, the Diocesan Agreed RE Syllabus, and the needs of pupils;
- teaching which built on previous learning and had high expectations of children's achievement.

Learning: The governors and the school leadership team reviewed the quality of children's learning, by cohort, class, group and individual, to provide teaching which enabled children to achieve at least nationally expected progress.

Pupils' welfare: The governors and the school leadership team reviewed the quality of the school environment and the school ethos, in order to provide a supportive environment conducive to learning and recreation.

Health and safety: The governors and the school leadership team reviewed 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.

Monitoring: All areas above were monitored for best value by:

1. In-house monitoring by the Headteacher, Business Manager and curriculum managers.
2. In-house monitoring by the Business Management Committee of the governing body (in-house audit committee).
3. Assessment meetings between the Headteacher, curriculum managers and class teachers each term.
4. Annual Performance Management.
5. Annual Budget Planning.
6. Monthly financial review.
7. Visits by the LA internal audit team and academy auditors.
8. Analysis of school pupil performance data, e.g. SATs results, standardised test results against all schools, LA schools, similar schools.
9. Analysis of financial data against benchmark data for similar schools.
10. Analysis of DfE pupil performance data, e.g. RaiseOnline
11. Ofsted Inspection and SIAMS Inspection reports
12. Governors' visits.
13. Governors' committee meetings.
14. Governors' full meetings.

Lessons learned:

- Further benchmarking exercises are required especially as staffing becomes increasingly expensive.
- The school charge card should be replaced with a procurement card with a lower limit.
- The cash flow forecasts should be updated for actual spends on a monthly basis as a means of monitoring budget to actual results. We should also have a rolling cash flow forecast looking ahead at least 6 months to monitor cash flow. This not only controls the risk of overspending on the bank account but it will also identify any surplus funds which the Academy could invest and for how long. This would enable the academy to maximise the amount of interest receivable from investments.

Name: Mrs Marie Sandford
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 30 Nov 2014