

Value for money statement

Year ended 31 August 2013

I accept that as accounting officer of Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT) 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.

In order to complete this statement, I have considered the arrangements in place in the 2012/13 academic year both centrally at OAT and in the work of the head office team which supports and monitors the work of each of our academies.

The OAT head office team provides support in school improvement and various business support services including; finance, human resources, information and communication technologies, governance and facilities management.

The school improvement team leads on the raising of educational attainment and standards. It takes local context into account but will strive to deliver a consistent strategy in all OAT academies. This approach will challenge and support the local senior leadership team at each academy and sets a methodology for improving attainment levels.

All other central services provided by OAT are there to allow the principals, senior leadership teams, and teaching and support staff to focus on delivering excellence at each academy.

I set out below how I have ensured that OAT's use of resources has provided good value for money during the academic year.

Improving education results

The achievement of the academies has continued to rise in 2013. The academies' headline attainment measure of 5 A*- C including English and maths improved by 4% from 2012 and by 8% from 2011. During this period the national increase was 2%. This significant increase has been achieved, despite the starting points of our students into secondary education being significantly below the national level. The academies have also consistently increased, at a rate faster than nationally, the Best 8 Average Point Score (CAPS Best 8) from 2011 to 2013.

The percentage of students making expected progress in English has increased by 5% from 2012 to 2013 (national increase 3%) and in maths the increase was 4% compared to a national increase of 3%. The percentage of students making better than expected progress in both English and maths has risen in line with national trends.

The disadvantaged students, for whom the pupil premium provides funding, have continued to narrow the achievement gap to their non-disadvantaged counterparts. Pupil premium students in all Ormiston academies have increased their 5 A*- C including English and maths by 8% from 2011 to 2013, and for those academies who joined before the 2012/13 academic year, attainment has risen by 13%. Both figures are at a rate significantly greater than the national average for non-pupil premium students.

Recent additions to the trust's senior team have been based on a chosen strategic direction, and the needs of all the academies. The new members of the team have extensive strategic school improvement experience, which is the seminal priority. The school improvement strategy is diagnostic, personalised and impact-focused. There is a meaningful approach to transformation, which works to ensure that the quality of educational provision received by our 25,000 young people becomes and remains outstanding. To that end, the Trust prioritises the sharing and disseminating of outstanding practice across the network, thus creating a self-propagating resource. Quality is assured through the deployment of a considerable group of professional and well-qualified education advisers and subject specialist consultants. The Trust is now committed to 'growing its own' within the network, with a particular focus on senior and middle leadership. The Trust is expanding in a considered and strategic manner, with a focus on creating capacity, establishing regional networks and a commitment to staying true to the overarching moral purpose of the organisation.

Financial governance and oversight

Overall responsibility for the financial governance and oversight of the Trust and its academies lies with the Trust board. This responsibility has been delegated to the OAT business oversight, risk and audit (BORA) committee.

The local governing body of each academy approves their budget each year and monitors regular financial and management information. This is also reviewed by the OAT BORA committee to ensure that income and expenditure are in line with budget.

The Trust has appointed Mazars as internal auditors to take the place of the previous responsible office role. The internal audit team reviews key financial policies, systems and procedures using a programme of work agreed in advance with the BORA committee. It presents termly reports on compliance to the finance and general purposes committee for each academy and also to the OAT BORA committee.

Better purchasing

OAT has used centralised procurement to achieve value for money in key areas of expenditure. For example, framework contracts are in place for ICT and capital works, to minimise the administrative burden and maximise the financial benefits for our academies.

OAT also procures other services centrally including; insurances, financial accounting software and support, budgeting software, estates and asset management software, internal audit services, external audit services, legal services and web services.

This secure economies of scale and discounted prices for the academies in the Trust. The tender processes for these services are managed centrally by OAT.

Maximising income generation

The Trust explores every opportunity to generate income through the use of facilities and assets at each academy. All additional income generated is used to provide additional opportunities for learners in our academies.

Reviewing controls and managing risks

Overall responsibility for the review of controls and the management of risks lies with the Trust board. This responsibility has been delegated to the BORA committee.

Individual academies are responsible for reviewing their own controls through their local governing body and finance and general purpose committee. The academies are supported in this by the internal auditors and the role of the regional finance directors.

Each academy has its own risk register and there is also a central risk register for OAT. These risk registers are working documents which are revised on a regular basis.

Lessons learned – future plans

The Trust will continue to strive to improve the levels of attainment of students at all levels and will continue its efforts to ensure students get jobs or a place in higher education or training once they leave.

A regionalised approach to support services for academies within the Trust is planned. This will enable the Trust to deliver an enhanced level of local and timely support.

The Trust plans to promote an OAT preferred supplier list to develop further the procurement strategy of the Trust to facilitate procurement and to ensure greater economies of scale.



Professor Toby Salt
Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer