

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: Notre Dame High School Norwich

Academy trust company number: 07913261

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of **Notre Dame High School Norwich** 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 including examples of good practice and areas for development.

Evidence of achievement of value for money

The educational outcomes for students at Notre Dame High have continued to improve. Results at GCSE in 13-14 were very good (69% 5+ GCSEs incl E&M on 'best' results) and at A Level the school achieved its best ever results placing Notre Dame as the highest achieving mainstream school in the County (88% A-C).

In order to deliver outstanding progress each member of the school community is expected to make a direct contribution not only to student academic progress but also to the general welfare and spiritual outcomes for students in support of the central mission of Notre Dame as a Catholic School – to educate the whole child.

To support this all teaching staff had a Performance Management target to promote good progress and outcomes by pupils. This was supported by a formal program of lesson observations, learning walks, CPD and coaching sessions. Trios were used to develop peer coaching and sharing of practice to enable staff to reflect upon and develop pedagogy.

All staff vacancies are considered at Leadership Team level and discussed with the Governing Body to ensure that the school continues to deploy staffing resources in the most effective way and so ensuring best value across the staffing budget.

A number of staffing changes were planned for and implemented at the beginning of 2013-14 including additional teaching staff in English, Maths and Science to reduce class sizes and boost progress in these core areas. 3 Progress mentors were appointed using

Pupil Premium funding to support the vulnerable groups within the school community one of which specifically targeted underachieving boys. Evidence shows that this new initiative has been successful and so will continue into 2014-15 with a further progress tutor appointed to support year 7 students who are not entitled to Pupil Premium funding but require enhanced support. The Leadership Team was strengthened by the addition of a second Deputy Head Teacher with a focus on the Teaching and Learning strategy across the school.

A range of lunchtime and after school clubs are run in a variety of subjects and are accessed by a number of pupils despite the size of the school's catchment area which means that some students have long bus or train journeys to and from school. The school has a vibrant and successful PE department that ensures participation across a number of sports and has notable achievements in sporting competitions despite the school's limited sports facilities.

Collaboration with other education providers is an important aspect of school life. The school is part of the Notre Dame Catholic cluster of schools and works closely with the local Catholic primary sector using the cluster funds to support special educational needs across the group including EAL provision as well as MFL teaching across the primary phase. In addition the school is also part of a wider pyramid of Catholic schools that includes 3 primary providers from Suffolk. Transition work for year 6 pupils is an important part of this collaboration to ensure that students are prepared for the step from primary to secondary school. This transitional work includes summer schools for the more vulnerable students funded by the DFE.

The training of future teachers is an important aspect of school life. Notre Dame is part of a Training School Alliance and is also a lead school for the School Direct Training Programme. Notre Dame also works as part of the Open Opportunity Partnership, a group of local High Schools that has curricular collaboration.

In addition I am an active member of the County wide Norfolk Secondary Education Leaders group and had the honour to chair the group over the past year.

Considerable upgrading of the site infrastructure has taken place over the past year. The school was fortunate to secure a bid through the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund that allowed for a revamping of the Geography Department including the conversion of old toilets and a small room into an extra good sized Geography classroom. This bid also meant that the school could afford to put funds to the refurbishment of the Food Technology space into a modern spacious teaching room with good quality appliances.

Financial Governance and oversight

The work of the Governors' Resources Committee is to provide a strategic oversight of the use of the financial resources of the school. This includes scrutinising and agreeing the annual budget and monitoring income and expenditure across the year in conjunction with the agreed figures. This is undertaken in part by scrutiny of the management

accounts presented at committee meetings. However, governors also have a good working knowledge of the school and use this to gather evidence of the effectiveness of financial decisions from students, staff and parents.

A robust Finance and Internal Procedures Policy is in place and is a living document used to ensure day to day probity and sound financial practice. The work of the Governors' Audit Committee includes looking specifically at financial processes and procedures to ensure policies are adhered to and proper financial controls and management are in place. The committee gathers evidence from Larking Gowen Chartered Accountants who have been commissioned to provide a 'Responsible Officer' service for the Governing Body, the School Business Manager and myself as well as considering in detail any recommendations from the School's external auditors. This enables them to give assurance to the full governing body that sound financial controls are present.

The school makes use of ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) for many purchases but will always look for best value across the sector for specific goods and services. Services purchased by the school and contracts are always reviewed at the end of their life to ensure that they still represent best value. Quotations are sought in line with the Finance policy and a cost/benefit analysis undertaken to ensure what is agreed is best fit for the school which can sometimes mean it is not necessarily the cheapest option. Discussions with other schools or on education forums are a good way of soliciting advice and recommendations on products and services.

Reviewing Controls and Managing Risks

Finance Policies are in place to ensure controls are robust and to anticipate possible risks to the school are effectively managed and the policies are reviewed regularly. These policies include the Finance and Internal Procedures Policy, Investment Policy, Charging and Bad Debt policies all of which are reviewed regularly at governor level to ensure they are fit for purpose. I meet with the School Business Manager on a regular basis to review the financial position of the school and discuss successes, challenges and future plans requiring a financial input. Governors have regular Management Reports presented throughout the year supported by detailed reports on specific issues and business cases as appropriate.

The school has a Risk Register which is reviewed annually and updated to ensure it reflects all current issues or possible concerns. The school has appropriate levels of insurance cover through a provider registered with the Crescent Purchasing Consortium. This is currently part of a long term agreement due to end in February 2017 at which time a review will take place to decide if the school will join the Risk Protection Arrangements through the Department for Education.

The school balances are being invested in a high interest account in the bank in line with the school's Investment Policy.

Areas for development

Suppliers that undertake considerable amounts of work at the school will be scrutinised to ensure that best value is always considered when the work is awarded. Consideration will also be given to possible annual contracts rather than pay as you use work and the scrutiny of existing contracts to ensure that additional work charged for shows best value.

I have also commissioned the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) to consider the ICT infrastructure in the school to ensure that it is fit for purpose both currently and into the future and giving best value. This included the school's Management Information System and the result of this work is a new MIS to be introduced in the 2015 that will provide a more effective system for recording and tracking both student and staff information.

Signed:

Name:

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: