

Value for Money Statement

Saint Dominic's Catholic Academy Trust

Academy trust company number: 08106388

Year ended 31 August 2013

I accept that as accounting officer of St. Dominic's Catholic 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 have 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 PRINCIPLE AIM

The principle aim of the Academy Trust is to provide high quality learning that helps all students to fulfil their intellectual potential and become good and emotionally well-balanced young people.

Further aims are as follows:

- To provide high quality teaching that challenges students and equips them for life by encouraging enquiry, originality, empathy and creativity in a positive atmosphere
- To provide an environment that enables students to learn and teachers to teach effectively
- To promote and recognise high standards of achievement in all spheres of activity
- To help students form successful relationships characterised by understanding others, tolerance, trust and self-respect
- To broaden horizons and to promote an interest in and respect for the local, national and global communities and their cultures
- To develop physical emotional health and a sense of the importance of morality and personal responsibility
- To encourage discernment, good judgement and self-discipline
- To provide equality of opportunity for all
- To develop an understanding of our responsibility as global citizens to live in a sustainable way

NEW INITIATIVES

Key influences on the Academy Trust's Improvement Plan for the period under review were the significant challenges and opportunities arising from national changes in education policy and funding, including the conversion to Academy status and the successful outcome of Saint Martin's 14-16 Age Extension Bid.

Key activities and targets as identified in the Improvement Plan are informed by the significant challenges and opportunities arising from national developments in education policy and funding.

The current targets include:

- Preparation and planning for 14 -16 first Y10 cohort September 2014
- Focus on vulnerable groups achievement
- Maintain outstanding provision by Ofsted and Section 48 (Diocese)
- Developing the teaching and learning environment of the Academy to meet future needs ie. 14-16
- Research into Key Stage 4 curriculum in all subject areas, participation in learning networks and supporting the work of Lead Practitioners in English.
- Developing relationships beyond the Academy as means of benefiting from the experience of industry, commerce, other schools and the voluntary sector to the education of students.

RAISE STANDARDS & IMPROVING OUTCOMES

The academy trust has in place a rigorous tracking of student progress and achievement, with underachievement identified early and appropriate interventions put in place. The academy operates an extensive programme of lesson observations and self-evaluation judgement of lessons by teaching staff.

The successful age range extension to 14-16 will raise standards and improve outcomes for young people for the following reasons:

- allow students to continue learning in a Catholic environment where the development of the whole person (including, but not exclusive to, academic achievement) is the primary concern
- allow students to avoid a transition process that some find educationally disruptive and even detrimental to emotional well-being and therefore attainment outcomes.
- give students and parents the option of a small-school environment to which they may be better suited
- remove the need for students to build new relationships with adults and peers at the same time as embarking upon studies for their first formal qualifications
- the most recent available evidence suggests that Leicestershire students who attend through schools outperform those students who move from High Schools to Upper Schools
- teachers will be in a better position to prepare students at KS3 for the demands of KS4 by virtue of teaching both

- students would be continuing at an outstanding school that is consistently at or near the top of the county's performance league table for KS3, and which would be targeting a similar position for KS4 (NB Leicestershire is the lead county in England for outcomes in KS3).
- less academic students receive thorough support in order to ensure that they leave school having achieved their potential in employer-valued qualifications, able to continue successfully into the next stage of their educational pathway.

COLLABORATION

In recent years, we have been developing our links with employers at KS3, with trips to work places and visits from industry representatives increasingly common. We plan to develop these links further, creating a role for a member of staff to be in charge of developing our partnerships with local employers. We have members of staff who have already demonstrated suitability for this role.

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

FINANCIAL REVIEW AND RISK

The Executive Committee receives monitoring reports detailing compliance with the Scheme of Delegation and The Academies Financial Handbook. The Committee 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'. The Trust also receives and approves the Annual Accounts and the Internal and External Auditors Management Report.

Directors have made it a priority to ensure that high standards are maintained within the framework of a budget that is sustainable, and have been rigorous in evaluating any proposals for additional expenditure. Key principles specifically identified in terms of financial planning during the year include:

- Retaining a sharp focus on teaching and learning
- Planning for the long term
- Investing for quality and efficiency
- Ensuring a proactive involvement in national consultations regarding school funding
- Developing a creative response to funding challenges

The Executive Committee considers financial risk via the Risk Management Register. The Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation

ENSURING THE OPERATION OF THE TRUST DEMONSTRATES GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES

The Academy ensures a continual focus on best value for money and clearly understands the value of its assets and how they can be used effectively to increase students' progress.

The Academy promotes fair competition through quotations and tenders, in accordance with its Financial Regulations, to ensure that goods and services are secured in the most economic, efficient and effective way.

The Executive Committee reviews the functions of the Academy, challenging how and why services are provided and setting targets with performance indicators for improvement

MAXIMUM INCOME GENERATION

The Academy explores every opportunity to generate income and was successful in gaining funding of £381,381

Funds have also been received from students/parents to pay for a wide range of educational visits and activities, and these have been applied to the associated costs.

Signed: ...*Mrs B M Carson*.....

Name: Brenda Carson

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date:6th December 2013.....