

# Value for Money Statement

**Academy trust name: Pontefract Academies Trust**

**Academy trust company number: 8445158**

**Year ended 31 August 2013**

I accept that as accounting officer of **Pontefract Academies 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 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.

## **Pre Amble**

Pontefract Academies Trust (PAT) is relatively new – it was formed on 1 April 2013, initially by a group of 4 primary and 2 secondary schools working together to improve aspirations, opportunities and achievement for the children in Pontefract thus pursuing value for money. The schools involved as of 31 August 2013 are Larks Hill, The Rookeries, Halfpenny Lane, Orchard Head, Carleton Community High and The King's.

## **Raising Student Achievement**

- A broad and balanced curriculum ensures all pupils have the opportunity to achieve and a task group are currently working on the make up of the new curriculum for 2014-15 and beyond.
- All PAT schools improved, either their overall attainment, progress or significant aspects of their performance in 2013 compared with 2012.
- The Heads of the schools meet half-termly to monitor review and evaluate progress against the action plans and to recommend new priorities, changes etc.
- All schools have robust tracking systems to record attainment and progress to ensure that interventions and support are targeted to achieve value for money.
- The schools have developed and are refining data sharing systems which are used to celebrate, share, challenge and support as appropriate. This practice is supplemented by cross phase teams of senior staff across trust schools being engaged in visiting each school and reviewing aspects of the schools work and performance.
- Key common areas for focus and improvement are agreed across the schools and action plans with calendared events are drawn up each academic year to address these priorities using school to school support to affect change or external consultants where expertise is not available within the PAT.

## **Quality of Teaching and Learning**

- Lessons observations, drop-ins, work scrutiny, pupil discussion and regular progress meetings ensures improving achievement for all pupils.
- Teaching is led by high quality new and experienced staff in all schools and the PAT is fully engaged in investing in and training the new generation of teachers, bringing energy and innovation to our schools.
- We focus on the differing needs of individuals and groups of pupils - those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, the Most Able, those in receipt of Pupil Premium funding and White British Boys, are some examples.

## **Financial Performance**

- Financial efficiency savings have already been achieved through joint procurement of business services for example: Financial software and systems, Payroll, H.R., Accountancy, Paper Purchase, Insurance. This has enabled a larger slice of the schools' budgets to be focused directly on improving the educational opportunities and experiences of children and young people and raising their aspirations and achievement.
- Other joint procurement has led to improved service quality and more targeted local control e.g. Education Welfare Services, Education Psychology Services.
- The PAT is planning to achieve further efficiency savings and improved quality of provision during academic year 2013/14 by creating and deploying a small centralised team to support the business functions of schools further – finance, procurement, H.R etc.
- New faster and cheaper jointly procured broadband provision will be operational by April 2014.
- Catering provision in a number of schools is under review.
- The Business Managers of the schools meet regularly to investigate and pursue joint provision e.g. electronic signing in system for visitors. There are plans to extend this model
- Staffing structures are regularly reviewed to ensure staff are efficiently and appropriately deployed.
- The Resources Committees of the schools meet usually on a half termly basis and review income and expenditure against the budgets on a regular basis. The PAT Board and Audit Committee receive minutes and budget information and considers spending patterns and decisions, intervening if required to ensure better value for money.
- After 6 months of operation, an interim audit was commissioned to identify strengths of internal financial systems and to address any recommendations as required.
- As a group of schools we have adopted a Best Value Policy.
- We benchmark our budgets against each other and similar schools locally and nationally to identify areas of similarity and difference, taking appropriate steps to follow up on any emerging issues or to make changes where necessary.

- All schools bid for capital funding in the various categories when available via the EFA. Parts of some of the schools buildings are new or refurbished, but none are newly schools and most require significant capital spending on Condition, Sufficiency and Suitability.

**Signed:** .....J A Craig.....

**Name:** ...Mrs Julie Anne Craig.....

**Academy Trust Accounting Officer**

**Date:** ...20/12/2013.....