

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: Graham James Primary Academy

Academy trust company number: 8476253

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of **Graham James Primary Academy** 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.

Improving Educational Results

- Targeted Improvement

We regularly review the staffing structure to ensure staff are efficiently deployed and are appropriately qualified and experienced to give the pupils the best educational opportunities as they move through all phases at the Academy. We regularly review the curriculum to ensure it is broad and balanced and provides the pupils with all the skills they need for the next phase in their academic journey. We continue to work with the other Academies in our Umbrella Trust and have joined together for school improvement projects and training to ensure the best value for money and training opportunities.

- Focus on Individual Pupils

We ensure all pupils receive quality first teaching and support. Our SENCO and her team provide quality interventions to those children that require additional support both learning and social. We deploy qualified and experienced teaching staff to support children with additional needs and those that are more able to ensure all pupils make the most progress they can. We have expanded our support staff team to meet the needs of our expanding school and the varying needs of the children.

- **Collaboration**
We have worked closely with the other academies in our Umbrella Trust to provide support to pupils, to provide CPD for staff to raise standards and to join together for financial best value also. The Academy also works closely with other local schools under the Cluster arrangement which has provided continued CPD for all staff and leadership teams. We have shared data across the Umbrella Trust and moderated assessments.
- **New Initiatives**
We continue to investigate ways to improve our provision and have worked hard to produce a relevant curriculum that meets the needs of our children and their families. We have invested our Sport Premium Funding with West Ham Football Club who have enhanced the curriculum in many ways from PE to improving Self Esteem.
- **Quantifying Improvements**
Our attainment and progress continues to be within the National Average figures and above. We continue to strive to improve standards year on year and this is evidenced in our results at both keystages. Attendance is above national and we were judged outstanding for behaviour and safety in our most recent Ofsted inspection. The academy trust continues to ensure this level is maintained and improved on by continued professional development and collaboration with local primary schools.

Financial Governance and Oversight

Our financial governance and oversight is strong, with a high level of expertise on our Governing Body and Finance Governors Sub-Committee.

Accounts are prepared and presented to the Governing Body at every meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee and are discussed and agreed.

Spending proposals are costed and presented to Senior Leaders/Governors and challenged appropriately.

Governors have instructed Internal Control Audits termly which are overseen by the Finance Committee and any recommendations are considered.

Better Purchasing

The Academy Manager has been influential in driving down costs through better procurement and negotiations throughout the year.

- **Fitness for Purpose**
All contracts are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they are still fit for purpose and best value for our academy. The Academy has negotiated a maintenance contract for the next three years which has proven to be more cost effective than our previous system. We continue to pursue contracts that can be negotiated across the Umbrella Trust.
- **Benchmarking**
The Academy spend is benchmarked against other academies and areas where we over or under spend have been investigated and assurances provided that the spend is appropriate to our Academy.
- **Options Appraisal**
The Academy ensures the tendering process is strictly followed in line with our Financial Regulations and policies. All required quotes are obtained and reviewed to ensure the best value for money is achieved. Governors provide support and challenge on all decisions to ensure this is the case.
- **Economies of Scale**
The Trust continues to work with the Umbrella Trust partners to consider any opportunities to reduce and share administration and procurement costs.

Building Improvements

- The Academy successfully won a bid from the DfE for £404,000 for replacement windows and cladding to improve the facilities. The works included the safe removal of asbestos and new double glazed windows and trespa panelled walls. The overall improvements have ensured a better and safer learning environment for our pupils and classrooms that provide suitable heat retention and air circulation throughout the year.

Lessons Learned

All service contracts are under review to ensure we receive the best value for money and the best service. We have identified a need to increase the ICT hardware and technical support and are in negotiations with the Umbrella Trust's Academies to investigate a way forward to support this process. We are also looking into Site Support across the Umbrella.

Signed: *P. Back*

Name: *Mrs. Petra Back*

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: *11/12/14*