

Brentford School for Girls
Value for money statement
1/12/13 – 31/8/14

Value for Money Statement

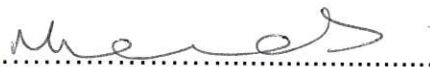
Academy trust name: Brentford School for Girls

Academy trust company number: 08286030

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Brentford School for Girls 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.

Signed: 

Name: MS MARAIS HEENDERS

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 27/11/14

Brentford School for Girls - Best Value Statement 2013-2014

The Governors and Headteacher of Brentford School are committed to achieving Best Value in all decisions made. We use the principles to support and enhance the school vision and ethos and ensure that they support us in securing continuous improvement within our school

At Brentford School for Girls we regularly review the functions of the school, challenging how and why services are provided and setting targets and performance indicators for improvement.

We

- Monitor outcomes and compare performance with similar schools and within the school
- Consult appropriate stakeholders before major decisions are made
- Promote fair competition through quotations and tenders to ensure that goods and services are secured in the most economic, efficient and effective way.
- Strive to ensure that the school is using its resources effectively to meet the needs of pupils with a view that this will lead to continuous improvement in the school's achievements and services.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that the principles of Best Value are applied on a daily basis as they undertake their respective roles within school.

What is Best Value?

Best value is a principle by which an organisation uses its resources to achieve value for money. In order to do these Governors will consider the following key areas:

Challenging how and why services are provided
Comparing pupil performance and financial performance against other similar schools
Consulting stakeholders before major decisions are taken
Promoting fair competition through seeking quotations and tenders to ensure that goods and services are secured in the most efficient way

The Governors' Approach

The Governors and School Managers will apply the principles of best value when making decisions about:

- the allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the school.
- the targeting of resources to best improve standards and the quality of provision.
- the use of resources to best support the various educational needs of all pupils.

Governors and school managers will:

- make comparisons with other/similar schools using data provided by the LA and the Government, e.g. RAISEonline, quality of teaching & learning, levels of expenditure
- challenge proposals, examining them for effectiveness, efficiency, and cost, e.g. setting of annual pupil achievement targets.
- require suppliers to compete on grounds of cost, and quality/suitability of services/products/backup, e.g. provision of computer suite, redecoration
- consult individuals and organisations on quality/suitability of service we provide to parents and pupils, and services we receive from providers, e.g. regular stakeholders views activities (Kirkland Rowell), Challenge Partners review, the EIP.

Governors and school managers will not:

- waste time and resources on investigating minor areas where few improvements can be achieved
- waste time and resources to make minor savings in costs
- waste time and resources by seeking tenders for minor supplies and services

The pursuit of minor improvements or savings is not cost effective if the administration involves substantial time or costs. Time wasted on minor improvements or savings can also distract management from more important or valuable areas.

Assessing Best Value 2013/14

Improving Educational Results

Targeted Improvement

This Academy Trust has continued to use the school finances to support the focus on raising achievement and improving standards across the school. A key priority has been to employ outstanding specialist teachers and deploy them effectively across the school, with a particular focus on Maths and English. Training and development across the school has also remained a priority.

As well as running our own internal training programme, we have also funded and commissioned 'Teaching Leaders' to run a yearlong programme for subject leaders focused on developing outstanding subject leadership across the school. Additional training has been sourced from outside providers, particularly focusing on the improving of teaching across the school. With the principles of 'best value', we have sourced the training together with a number of schools under the Challenge Partners umbrella. This has helped to keep costs lower.

Additionally support staff training has focused on up skilling the administration team in order to ensure increased effectiveness and working closely with teaching assistants to improve the impact of their work on raising standards. Governors and school managers believe that securing a well-trained and effective work force is necessary for continued growth.

Additional staffing in the form of specialist graduates has been used to improve student outcomes. In 2014, the schools examination results were again outstanding. 70% of our students achieved 5 A*-C with English and Maths. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds achieved exceptionally well with only a small gap in achievement between them and all other students. All other gaps within school are closing rapidly at GCSE. At A level, the school retained its respectable position (ALPs 3), with all students gaining access to university or employment following this.

Governors will continue to review the staffing structure in order to ensure that best value continues to be achieved, through the appointment of essential staff and by fully utilising the skills of staff currently employed at the school.

Focus on Individual Pupils

The trust recognises that its funding must support the needs of all pupils. The trust works closely with the Local Authority in providing specialist support for ASD pupils and commissions a variety of services from the LA for pupils with additional needs (e.g.) TSS. Pupil Premium and Catch up funding is used to support targeted work with students who are in receipt of the additional funding. This year the trust has continued to invest in staff to support individual need e.g., The Catch Up Leader, Literacy Consultant, Senior Tutors in KS5, DATA Consultant, Sixth Form Mentor and Community Coordinator etc. Additional provision has also been developed and strengthened, including the Challenge the Gap programme for FSM Pupils, Year 10 programme for WENG/FSM students, Year 11 English and Maths residential, Humanities literacy, programme Brentford University and the Headstart programme in the Sixth form, Accelerated Reader, Lexia reading programmes and the Sixth form reading clubs. Additional time has been provided for Maths and English departments to facilitate opportunities for small group and one to one tuition where required.

Wave 3 intervention during the year has been used to further support student need where necessary. This has included tuition at KS3, 4 and 5, the use of Magnificent Generation inspirational coaching programme, Ghia learning techniques with a study skills focus and additional revision and study school days during the school holidays and weekends. The school have also run both a Year 6 into 7 Summer School and Year 10 transition summer camp. Although the attendance numbers were not as high as invited (40) it is hoped that the 19 students that did attend will benefit from this intense intervention.

The Inclusion and Safeguarding teams provide additional and extensive support for vulnerable pupils. The school provides specialist counselling services which is available to both staff and students on a referral basis in order to further support student and staff wellbeing. The school also buys in services from the Local Authority e.g. CAMHs and SEN section.

The school continues to review the curriculum on a yearly basis to ensure that it meets the needs of individuals. In September 2013 the curriculum changes included:

- The implementation of the Year 7 Literacy course within Humanities
- The implementation of additional English and Maths lessons for KS4 pupils to support them continuing to develop Accelerated Reader across KS3 (Literacy programme)

- Introducing the DEAR reading programme
- The introduction of statistics into KS4 Maths

The curriculum continues to be well resourced and responsive to student need. Capitation is well planned and takes into account feedback from stakeholders. A contingency fund has continued to support departments with any midyear developments

Collaboration

The school works closely with other Hounslow Schools through the Hounslow EIP (Education Improvement Partnership). It is also a member of a Challenge Partnership, an organisation which works on the basis of 'School to School' support. Both organisations have supported the school in ensuring that training and development opportunities are sourced at good value. Additionally we have worked alongside partnership schools to source resources such as additional HR services. Staff training and recruitment opportunities have been exploited across the partnerships. We continue to source a number of services from our Local Authority including Pay Roll. This provision is reviewed and quality assured each year to ensure best value.

What impact has the Academy Trust had on pupil outcomes?

Quantifying improvements

Student outcomes are continuously improving. The 2013-14 ROL shows that the school is in the top 11% of all schools nationally for progress. The results show a steady trend in improvement over the last 3 years. Progress of students in English and Maths is now significantly above average (See levels of expected and above expected progress figures) as is the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. GCSE results in the summer 2014 show that the trend in improvement continues with a significantly large number of subjects achieving above the 80% threshold for students achieving a C grade and above.

Keystage 5 data shows that the school continues to remain in a respectable position at Post 16 with student progress achieving an ALPs scale of 3

Behaviour data shows that the school has had no permanent exclusions over the last 2 years and that the percentage of fixed term exclusions is down on the previous year and in line with girls nationally now. In house behaviour reports show a declining picture in terms of negative behaviour incidents. Tight systems and regular monitoring have supported the school in securing continuous improvements in this area. The school invested in the VIVO rewards scheme in 2013/14 but has since made the decision to run its own in-house provision, which is more cost effective and supports the focus and development of the house system. Attendance data shows that the school continues to meet its challenging targets. The schools attendance was 95% last year, placing the school again in the top percentile when compared with similar schools nationally (ROL 2014)

Financial Oversight and Governance

The Premises and Finance committee with the Accounting Officer and School Business Manager meet termly to monitor and evaluate the use of the resources within the academy. A termly report on the use of the Pupil Premium and Catch Up funding is also discussed with recommendations and suggestions made for its effective spending.

The school closely monitors its cash flow by monthly reconciliation. The monthly accounts are sent to governors for review and comment, and a monthly meeting takes place with the Headteacher, Finance Manager, Business Manager to discuss the monthly reports and any 'going' concerns. The school runs a high interest account which it regularly reviews in its discussions with the School's Relationship Manager from the bank and the Headteacher. The account is used by depositing revenue into the reserve account until money is needed thus allowing the surplus 'cash' to make money. This money has been used effectively to offset any bank charges incurred. It is the Academies Trust intention to try, where possible, to maintain a cash balance in the Reserve Account at the end of each month of at least the equivalent sum of all staff salaries for the following month. This has been managed with ease for the year 2013-14.

The trust members (governors) regularly monitor and review all areas of the school.

Insurances for the Academy and Governors liability have been arranged and have been used effectively to manage any risk associated with becoming an Academy Trust. This is reviewed annually to make sure that it not only offers good value for money but is also covering the Academy for any unforeseen occurrence.

Better Purchasing

Fitness for purpose

The school makes use of the opportunity, when contracts are due to be renewed, to review making sure at all times that they receive a mix of quality and effectiveness for the least cost. The school over the last year has prepared large and small tenders covering building works, refurbishment of several classrooms, the new Sixth Form study/social area and the supply of ICT equipment across the whole school site.

Benchmarking

The school has used a networking group of local academies to benchmark against. Seeking advice when renewing contracts/sourcing new companies and also checking value for money against like for like. This has also been used to check staffing levels/salaries (job evaluation) across similar establishments as well as getting this checked by an independent HR advisor against a set of criteria agreed by the Local Government Association (LGA), taking the opportunity of working closely together to explore and reduce workload associated with procurement by seeking support from colleagues and trying to reduce procurement costs.

Option appraisal & Economies of scale

Different options have been considered by the school's finance team during the year to make sure that purchasing is prudent yet efficient. It is hoped that the commissioning of PWA (surveyors and building consultants) this year to assist the school to secure a successful bid for a capital build project for (new windows across the whole school site) next year will allow reducing school budgets to be used for other projects whilst replacing windows that have passed their best and now becoming a health and safety issue. With the strict guidance given to PWA it is hoped that the tendering process will be highly effective in getting the school the best possible deal and new windows that will serve the school community well over the next 20/30 years

Generating Additional Funding/Resources

The Accounting Officer and School Business Manager regularly meet to discuss the generation of additional funds. This year the academy is in receipt of the Cornelius Project funding for international links (Year 2) and we have also won a Sinnot Fellowship.

The school has also developed a growing alumni network which is already generating additional resource for the school.

To maximise income generation the school also hire its facilities to local community groups such as Brentford Football Club, Ishmali Language School and a variety of sports groups use the school facilities during the week and at weekends which is generating additional and reliable income for the school.

The recruitment of new governors who fulfil the shortage 'expertise' areas on the governing body has also supported the academy in its drive to have more specialist input from areas such as finance and legal. This year the school has further developed its community links which have generated extensive resource and expertise for the school to draw on.

Monitoring

All areas of the school are monitored for Best Value. This is achieved in the following ways:-

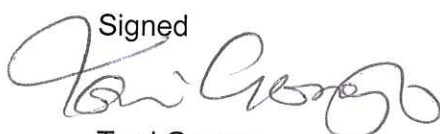
1. In-house monitoring by the Headteacher, Senior Leadership and Middle leadership. e.g. monitoring weeks- quality of teaching audit , work sampling etc.
2. Annual mini Ofsted - Challenge Partners Review
3. Annual Performance Management and Mid-year review
4. Exams Analysis meetings with Middle Leaders
5. Regular weekly line management for middle and senior leadership
6. Annual Budget Planning
7. Finance Managers monthly financial review
8. Analysis of pupil performance data at each data point collection
9. Analysis of financial data, e.g. against bench mark data for all schools, LA schools, similar schools
10. Analysis of DfE pupil performance data, e.g. RAISEonline

11. Ofsted inspection reports
12. Termly classroom observations
13. Governors' termly committee meetings
14. Governors full termly meetings
15. Governors' Annual Finance Review
16. Governors' Review of School Improvement Plan (Headteachers Reports)
17. Audit reports
18. Health and Safety reviews
19. Annual review of its asset management register

Where the trust could do better

The trust moving forward will need to review the long term cost implications of running the school alongside the planned budget cuts due to the change in formula and the decrease in student numbers across the Local Authority. The key areas for review will be:

- Review of the staff structure – Cost implications
- Recruitment to Year 7 and Post 16 – A clear marketing strategy will need to be developed
- A review of the current SLA's. The cleaning contract is expensive and is not currently delivering what is required. This is always a good opportunity to check contracts and to get the best mix of fit for purpose, quality and effectiveness for the least cost, as well as making sure that services and goods provided are the best that are available as well as making sure that they are what the school need as well as looking at alternative solutions and options that are available.

Signed


Terri George
Chair of Governors
Date:



Marais Leenders
Headteacher
Date:

Agreed at Governing Body meeting on: 27th November 2014