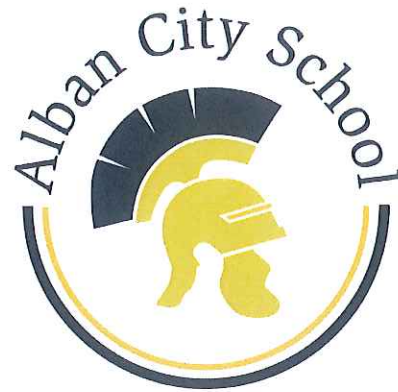


Academy trust name: Alban City Free School Ltd

Academy trust company number: 07644208



Value for Money Statement

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Alban City School 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.

Introduction

Alban City School opened in September 2012. The school was established to meet a need for school places in the centre of St Albans. The school opened with two Reception classes and will continue to admit 60 children each year until the school reaches capacity in 2018. For the year ended 31 August 2014 the school had two Reception classes and two Year 1 classes.

Educational Results

The school was inspected by Ofsted in February 2014 who reported that it is a good school. A summary of the key findings were:

- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher and all members of staff have been highly successful in establishing a school with a strong ethos and drive for improvement. Parents are highly supportive.
- The behaviour of pupils is excellent. Pupils are eager to learn, resilient and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers use information and communication technology very effectively to enliven learning and enthuse pupils in a range of subjects.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. The teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds) is a strength and results in pupils' excellent reading skills.
- Pupils make good progress overall in reading, writing, mathematics and in a wide range of other subjects.
- The governing body is well informed, has a good range of skills and experience, and is highly committed to making this an outstanding school.

Deployment of Staff

All staff (both teaching and support staff) employed at Alban City School are fully qualified. The school has also employed specialist teachers for Music, French and sports coaching. The deployment of such skilled staff has enabled the school to operate smoothly, providing high quality education.

Individual Pupils

Additional support and intervention programmes have been provided for children with additional needs. Significant vulnerable groups of children therefore perform as well as other children.

Collaboration with Educational Providers

The school has developed partnerships with many educational providers and community groups. We work in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire to provide placements for student teachers. We also provide work experience for secondary school pupils from local schools. The school has also developed partnerships with Surestart, the St Albans West Partnership and local primary schools.

New Initiatives

Alban City School has managed its resources highly effectively during the year ended 31 August 2014. A comprehensive budget was developed prior to the start of the year and the outcome has shown that the school used its resources efficiently within budget. During the year an exterior canopy was installed in order to create an outside learning space that would be available in all weather. At the end of the year a Food Technology room was installed which will enrich the children's learning in future years.

Quantifying Improvements

Achievement is high. In the 2014 National Phonic Screening Check 83% of pupils achieved the expected standard compared to 74% nationally and 77% in Hertfordshire. Behaviour and attendance are good, with an attendance rate of 96.3%. Financial performance during this period therefore suggests that the school shows good value for money.

Financial Governance and oversight

The Governing Body has a Resources Committee and a Pupil Achievement Committee which hold the Headteacher to account for use of the resources, staffing and pupil progress. During the year there have been three Resource Committee meetings, three Pupil Achievement Committee meeting and four full Governing Body meetings. All meetings have been fully clerked. The Resources Committee has

ensured that accounts have been scrutinised, sufficient quotes obtained for services and resources, budgets profiled and appropriate testing has been undertaken.

The Responsible Officer has visited termly to conduct an independent assessment and testing of the school's processes and controls. The main areas of focus during the year were financial controls over bank reconciliations, payroll, purchasing and lettings income, compliance with the 'musts' contained in the Academies Financial Handbook, anti-fraud checklist and IT general controls. The findings have been shared with the Full Governing Body and any recommendations have been implemented.

Better Purchasing

The School Financial Procedures have clear parameters detailing the way we select goods and services to show good value for money. Each member of staff is aware of the cost of the resources and the budget they are spending against. We have clear systems in place.

All purchases made are linked to the School Development Plan with clear links to the teaching and learning. We purchase good quality resources in order that they will last a considerable amount of time, we recycle products where possible but also consider the overall value for money. The school obtains 3 quotes for all items over £10,000, such as the implementation of the exterior canopy. Price comparisons are made before making any purchases where it is realistic to do so.

All contracts are reviewed regularly by the Business Manager and cost implications considered by the Resources Committee. All services provided are monitored for effectiveness and value for money. The Business Manager and Headteacher seek to use economies of scale when procuring CPD, services and resources where possible.

Maximising Income Generation

The school has generated additional income through letting a room to an independent pre-school provider which operates every day during term time. Also the school lets its hall and meeting rooms to third parties for regular after school and evening classes.

The school is supported by a thriving PTA who have held several events at the school to raise additional funds.

Reviewing Controls and Managing Risks

The risk register has been reviewed and updated during the year. The register assesses the impact of a variety of factors including finance, health and safety, behaviour, data protection, fraud, and steps taken to mitigate those risks.


Finance is a regular agenda item for both the Resources Committee and the Full Governing Body. The Business Manager and Headteacher discuss monthly management information reports, including bank reconciliations, payroll reports and systems reconciliations. The cash flow was monitored closely during the year and reported to the Governing Body, who reviewed and challenged these reports. The level of funds in short term higher interest deposit accounts was increased during the year in accordance with our investment policy.

Lessons Learned

During the year the Governing Body undertook a review of the school's long term strategy and vision. This led to updating the school's mission statement to ensure it reflects current needs and objectives.

One of our most valuable lessons has been to network and share information with other local schools. This has led to increased educational opportunities for our children and cost savings for the school.

All internal systems have been working well and we intend to continue using these systems in 2014/15.

Signed: 

Name: Mrs Janet Goddard

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 15 December 2014