



## **Value for Money Statement**

**Academy trust name: The Rowan Learning Trust**

**Academy trust company number: 08010464**

**Year ended 31 August 2014**

I accept that as accounting officer of The Rowan Learning 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.

All establishments within the Trust are subject to robust financial procedures with particular emphasis on applying the principles of best value (challenge, compare, consult and compete) to all decisions made. The key focus of the Trust remains improving educational outcomes, and our vision is to create a world class education within our academies to enable every student to realise their full academic potential.

### **Improving Educational Outcomes**

In a year of turbulent examinations results, Hawkley Hall has continued its high achievement with 76% of students gaining 5EM and a Value Added score of 1030.5. In its first year with the Trust, Kirkby High School students gained 30% 5EM and a Value Added Score of 927.7.

Hawkley Hall High School has continued to lead on developing a high calibre of Teaching and support staff across the Trust. A cross-Trust Senior Leadership Team has been created to both challenge and support in all aspects of school improvement. As a lead organisation in the Schools Direct teacher-training programme during 2013/14, the Trust is expanding the number of places on offer to involve all of its establishments.

At Hawkley Hall, due to an increased NOR, an additional maths classroom has been built and a sports hall extension with dance studio is under construction. Both of these building projects ensure that sufficient classroom space facilitates high quality teaching and learning.

At Kirkby High internal building modifications have provided an additional general classroom space, three additional laboratories and specialist classrooms for ICT, textiles, graphics and product design. All of these building projects ensure suitable classroom space for high quality teaching and learning.

## **Financial governance, risk management and review of controls**

The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls has been informed by the Trust's external auditors, Haines Watts, and further improvements to the financial procedures have been made during the financial year 2013/14. A new Trust-wide financial procedures manual has been written and distributed to establishments.

The Trust governance system provides the appropriate structure for challenge and decision-making. The Board of Directors lead on strategy, underpinned by the Audit Committee. The Trust appointed Responsible Officer has continued to carry out the internal audit function across the schools, submitting termly reports to the Audit Committee. Risk registers are maintained and reviewed at academy and Audit Committee/Trust level. A Trust Investment Policy has been implemented and will be regularly reviewed to utilise spare resources to best effect. Insurance cover has been reviewed across the Trust and levels amended where necessary to provide appropriate levels of cover to support the Trust's activities and protect acquired assets.

Responsibility for the day to day operational management of the individual academies is delegated to the Local Governing Body and its sub-committees, who discuss and challenge the financial information presented on a termly basis. Monthly bank reconciliations are undertaken and regular budget management reports are produced for monitoring purposes.

## **Purchasing**

Governors and school managers have developed procedures for assessing need, and obtaining goods and services which provide "best value" in terms of suitability, efficiency, time and cost. These procedures comply with the Trust's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which can be found in the Trust's Finance Manual and are reviewed annually. A centralised approach to purchasing has delivered savings in Information Technology support/licences and the cost of printing and copying in the schools, following consideration of the longer term benefits.

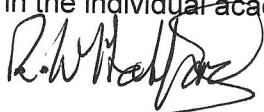
Tending processes have been used effectively to secure best value on computer equipment purchased for the Trust's establishments and contracts have successfully been renegotiated in relation to the cost of telecommunications. Benchmarking data of similar organisations provided by the external auditors was reviewed to identify areas for consideration.

## **Generating Income**

Governors and school managers have utilised the hire of school facilities, to the benefit of the local community, to generate income. Additional income has been generated through sharing the ability and experience of staff in raising the standards in other educational establishments. Consideration was given to other grant income through, for example, Grants4Schools & Sport England and a successful Academies Capital Maintenance Fund bid secured the allocation of a capital grant for a building project at Hawkley Hall.

Continued review of operations and strategies as the Trust develops will lead to continuous improvement in the individual academies' achievements and services.

**Signed:**



**Name:** Royston Halford

**The Rowan Learning Trust Accounting Officer**

**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> December 2014