

LINK ACADEMY TRUST

Landscope School House
Landscope, Nr Ashburton
Devon. TQ13 7LY
Tel: 01803 762113



Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: The Link Academy Trust

Academy trust company number: 10049068

I accept that as accounting officer for the Link Academy 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 Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 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 Trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during the academic year.

- Continued considering allocation/targeting/use of resources which has enabled improved quality of provision and joint procurement of resources leading to significant savings, particularly the annual stationery order for every school when combined and the fixing of energy costs prior to the significant increases being experienced currently.
- The Trust is committed to continuing as an employer of choice, developing our staff to take on more senior roles through a comprehensive investment in training and continuous professional development. This minimises disruption for our pupils, avoids high staff turnover and associated recruitment costs and enhances our staff retention. This applies to non-teaching as well as teaching staff and middle managers. Our CPD annual provision model is now clearly set out and staff are encouraged to participate through the staff appraisal process. A talent management approach involving Trustees has also supported successful employment. Opportunities have been created for Middle Leadership through Trust-wide subject leadership and talent management is a development instigated by Executive Improvement Leaders as part of their NPQEL CPD courses.
- The formation of the EIT has ensured that even as we grow we are able to maintain the highest quality strategic school improvement. We continue to expect experienced Academy Heads to step up to manage two Academies which results in a reduced senior leadership cost to the small schools and provides career and pay progression for those able to demonstrate an appropriate level of leadership. This in turn released two experienced Academy Heads to take on the EIT role leading school improvement across the Trust. A career progression document illustrates the extended opportunities now available for staff joining the Trust and this is available on our website.
- Upper Pay Scale teachers continue to contribute effectively across the Trust, this not only shares best practice but also provides sound evidence to support their own career progression and is cost effective use of 'experts'.

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- Staff recognise that as the Trust expands opportunities to progress are available by moving schools within the Trust for a period or permanently to gain experience with new responsibilities and in new settings which they may need in order to seek promotion. Staff moves are fully considered annually and planned over three years to ensure both professional development and widening experience.
- The CBU continue to develop the understanding of their role and develop their effectiveness to negate the need for external, costly support.
- Catering has been brought 'in house' in a planned, phased manner in order to make significant savings and improve food quality, more than 66% of Trust schools are now in-house, using locally sourced healthy food to provide quality meals.
- School cleaning has been overhauled and consistent provision by one company has reduced costs and improved outcomes.
- Schools joining the Trust have had induction to support them to follow Trust practice, including shared and supportive working practices, which ensures they explore all the established avenues of cost cutting currently in place across the Trust.
- Staffing structures in new joining schools continue to be scrutinised to ensure staffing levels are appropriate and where they are not measures have been put into place to reduce costs.
- Additional staff wellbeing and mental health support was put in place during the period of the pandemic to enable staff to continue to manage the situation effectively thereby reducing absence. Subsequently consideration for staff has been extended further to ensure our staff have access to an external supervision service and the Give-Back day is always well-received by every staff member.

The effectiveness of these strategies can be seen in the continual improvement made in curriculum and business standards including:

- Rigorous evaluations of impact on student outcomes, value added progress, student attendance and transition issues.
- Sharing of good practice amongst collaborative schools.
- Financial Governance. Our governance arrangements include regular monitoring by the Trust Board and its sub-committees, including the Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) and Audit Committee. They receive regular reports, and ask relevant questions as recorded in the minutes. The work of these committees is further informed by regular Internal Audit Officer reports from Griffin Accountants.
- Reviewing Controls and Managing Risk. Regular budget reports have been reviewed by the F&GP and Audit Committee, as well as by budget holders, in order to ensure that spending is within budget. Actions taken to manage risk include subscribing to the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) provided by the ESFA. Professional advice (e.g. HR/legal) has also been sought when needed.

Nicola Dunford

Name: Nicola Dunford
Trust Accounting Officer

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