

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: **Bexley Grammar School**

Academy trust company number: **7455732**

Year ended: **31 August 2017**

I accept that as accounting officer of **Bexley Grammar 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:

The bulk of the school's budget is spent on staffing and during the previous academic year the school was fully staffed with well qualified, specialist teachers who delivered a demanding curriculum to a high level of success (see 'Achievements and Performance' section above and the results tables on our website).

Similarly, support staff are well qualified, experienced people. These include a strong team of Higher Level Teaching Assistants (specialists who between them deliver a wide range of support to students); fully trained science technicians; an efficient team of administration staff; site staff who take a proactive role in maintaining and improving the school premises, catering staff who are proud of the service they provide and cleaning staff who also take pride in keeping the site looking its best. All of these teams, and particularly their supervisors, work in tandem to make the school run smoothly to produce a rich educational experience for students which leads to excellent results.

The school continues to operate with only two Deputy Heads. Whilst the reduction puts considerable strain on the Senior Management Team, this continues to demonstrate a clear commitment to reducing our staffing costs as far as is possible. This year we did not replace two midday supervisors when they retired in the summer. Our Cover administrator moved out of the area and following her resignation, our attendance officer took on the responsibility with a small increase to her hours. Reception staff have absorbed the hours she used to provide each day. Two members of support staff, in SEN and the IB, have reduced their hours while two other administrative staff took on new responsibilities in the IB in addition to their current responsibilities without expanding their hours. Teaching staff load is matched closely to the curriculum following the options processes for Year 10 and Year 12 and leaving teachers are only replaced as demand dictates. Members of staff continue to be generous with their time both in school and beyond with enrichment activities, clubs and events. The sheer number and range of these enrichment activities, including visits and journeys, arranged in one academic year is startling (see weekly Newsletters on website).

Accountability for delivering results is established and monitored through Performance Management and through whole school self-review. Performance Management involves rigorous review and target setting which is linked to pay progression including financial rewards for exceptional performance. The two Learning Teams drive the school's self-review process. Each of

these is linked to a committee of Governors through the two Deputy Headteachers who lead the teams attend the committee meetings. The Learning Teams are made up of a range of responsibility-holders drawn from across the school and each team conducts a review of different aspects of the school every term. These reviews include lesson observations, analysis of data and interviews with students and staff. Judgements are made and recommendations for improvements suggested. The impact of these reviews is considered and discussed at the relevant governors' committee meeting. This work and analysis of results and reports drives the School Improvement Planning process.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is a comprehensive planning document to which the leader of every area of the school contributes in an organic fashion in response to the school's identified priorities for the year ahead. The review section of the plan builds into the targets for the following year. This year the timing of the SIP was moved from February to September to tie in with Performance Management and Department Review meetings with the Headteacher.

The Sixth Form team has successfully recruited over 200 students into the school's first fully IB Year 12, to further develop an extremely high-achieving Sixth Form both academically and in extra-curricular terms. This is the culmination of a commitment made by governors more than six years ago. The work of this team is now to ensure the smooth running of the IB cohort, twice the size of any previous IB cohort, and maintain/develop the effective recruitment process for the second cohort in September 2018 which will make the whole Sixth form fully IB.

In light of the Sutton Trust's recommendation that staff training is the most cost-effective way of securing improvements in outcomes for underperforming and disadvantaged students, our Staff Development focuses on Personalisation which has had a positive impact on every teacher's classroom practice. Directors of Study and members of the Senior Leadership Team track the progress of individuals and groups as assessments are made. A range of interventions is put in place where it is necessary to support students.

The school curriculum offers excellent value to students, as outlined below:

KS3 courses are delivered in two years rather than three and students on this accelerated course study two languages, Latin, Mathematics, English, Science, Art, Drama, RS, Music, PE, Geography, Computing, Design Technology, History and a course in PSHCE which includes Citizenship.

At KS4: In Year 9, courses either prepare students for examinations by adding depth of study or they begin coverage of the new GCSEs which have heavier content. Students then go on in Years 10 and 11 to take 12 GCSEs in English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, two language subjects (French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Russian or Latin), all three separate sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics), Religious Studies (delivered in just one period per week), either Geography or History, and three other subjects from a range of options including creative and practical subjects.

At KS5 students are challenged by taking the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (please see Curriculum on website for details of this programme). This challenging, world-class programme of both depth and breadth means that their staff contact time is high and that private study periods are few and precious to students.

Good value is demonstrated in the destinations of our students after seven years of study. DfE data regularly shows Bexley Grammar School as one of the most successful school in terms of gaining Russell Group university places in all of Kent, Bromley and Bexley schools combined. A recent survey ranked the school 7th in England for the success of our Year 13 students in gaining

places in Higher Education. The summer 2017 cohort secured the highest number of Oxbridge places in the school's history (10, although one declined to take up her place).

Since conversion to Academy status, the school has used its freedoms to target spending on services more efficiently. We have shaped many service agreements to suit our needs (e.g. Educational Psychology, Behaviour Support, EWO Service, IAG, Governorship, HR advice, legal advice etc.) and this has resulted in considerable savings and improvements in service. This year we re-negotiated our IT services contract reducing our spending by £25k per annum.

We have introduced a printing credits system for students this year to reduce paper and ink consumption in the school: students receive a set number of 'free' credits and parents then have pay to top up their credits if they are above average users. We have again reduced the number of photocopiers required by staff and reprographics, and this reduced the number of printers too, supported by paperless solutions in the classroom including online textbooks and Google Classroom. The Finance team has been instrumental in moving from paper to electronic systems. 'Parent Pay' enables a cash-free and cheque-free office with all the efficiency savings this brings with it. All ticket bookings for concerts, plays and so on are handled through an online booking system which again saves considerable time and money. Our online system (Evolve) has proved very effective for planning and organising the numerous visits and journeys that we run throughout the year to enrich our students' experience. The system streamlines the complex process whilst ensuring that procedures are adhered to strictly, particularly regarding risk assessments. The Green Team, a student-led group which is dedicated to saving energy and sustaining resources has taken a very active role in promoting recycling, improving the paper recycling system throughout the school and particularly in the canteen.

We have reviewed and trimmed funding to budget holders within school and encouraged greater efficiency as the school budget continues to tighten. Supply costs have remained low because and teaching staff who do not have a full allocation of contact time are used to provide cover. All staff (including support staff) contribute their time to support invigilation requirements, reducing the cost of invigilators. The costs of ground maintenance remain low, supplemented by the cricket club which has a long-standing letting with us and supported by the site team.

The school's Finance team monitor all spending and seek best-value on all purchases. They follow governor and Education Funding Agency rules for procurement of all goods and services including tendering where this is required. Our IT hardware five-year refresh programme is no longer funded and as the excellent five-year warranties run out, IT services do their best to keep our PCs limping along. The Parents' Association has been key in providing funding for the small number of computers we have been able to purchase this year to equip our new Sixth Form study area.

The lettings of the school site brings in a steady income and the Lodge provides a healthy rental income. The school continues to benefit from the telephone masts rental.

In the past six years capital funding bids have seen improvements to sixth form study areas, large proportions of our flat roof areas, our heating system, security gates, a new reception area and the long-overdue replacement of all our aging and inefficient boilers, ensuring long-term reliability and efficiency savings. This year, our bid secured us a brand new two-hundred seat theatre with a sixth form study area downstairs. All of these works have been delivered on time and according to financial guidelines producing a significantly better and safer school experience for our students. We successfully bid (on appeal) for the final phase of flat roof replacement where it has been long overdue.

Best value is also established through various collaborations:

- We are members of the Penhill Academies Trust (PAT), an umbrella trust of five stand-alone academies in Bexley, four secondary and one primary. We work in partnership across the Trust with all stakeholders to provide innovative opportunities and raise aspirations and outcomes for all. Our focus is to improve learning outcomes, pupil welfare, transition, professional development, teacher recruitment, leadership skills, governance and value for money.
- We are active members of the South East London Schools' Alliance (SELSA). In the current teacher recruitment crisis it is increasingly important to have this avenue to recruit good graduates directly from University to train as teachers within the member schools and also to be able to share teachers across or between schools where this is appropriate. A recently retired local Headteacher has breathed new life into the department-level meetings in addition to the well-established Heads' meetings, which has been particularly effective in a time of upheaval in the curriculum at KS4 and 5.
- We link with several Bexley primary schools and help them to deliver improved language, science and PE teaching. This work pays back dividends to our students who are trained to lead these activities. We lead, with the LA, a collaborative partnership with three primary schools to improve the teaching of science, ultimately supporting primary transition to secondary school.
- We operate, with the other three Bexley selective schools, the Bexley selection and admissions processes, benefiting from the resultant economies of scale. We provide all the 11+ testing within the grammar schools and we worked with Bexley to reduce the cost of the whole testing system. We continue to try to curb the continued demand on 'In-Year' selection tests which we operate effectively through this collaboration.
- Our membership of the Prince's Teaching Institute gives us high-quality and economical staff development linking our staff to others across the country in developing cutting-edge lessons and development plans. Seven of a maximum of nine of our departments received The Prince's Teaching Institute Mark for 2016/17 and our school is regularly featured on the PTI website in recognition of its innovative work.
- As an IB school, linking with others and sharing resources is a natural component and we expect as a matter of routine to participate in high quality professional development and to have access to online resources for our teachers. We have successfully negotiated with the IBO a five year plan of staff training at reduced cost by combining online training modules with local IB hub sessions.
- Our Language College outreach work continues to draw in numerous primary schools as well as leading a Strategic Learning Network (SLN) for Languages in secondary schools, providing opportunities for staff development through the sharing of best practice.

Our fully bursar-trained Finance Manager attends bursar meetings with representatives from other schools and this collaboration has resulted in the sharing of views with regard to suppliers and various efficiency savings and joint applications for bulk reductions.

The governors' Finance, Resources and Audit Committee includes people experienced in financial affairs who are fully aware of all matters relating to the school's finances. One of the governors

acts as the school's Responsible Officer and he comes into school regularly to examine the school finances in any regard he chooses, reporting back to the full committee afterwards. Similarly, all of the work of the finance office is examined by external auditors. Under this high level of scrutiny nothing other than minor administrative improvements have been made during the period the school has operated as an academy. The Finance Manager provides information to the auditor early in order to secure a discount on the costs. This year the auditor awarded the school an absolutely 'clean sheet' for the third year running. The school's accounts are submitted in a timely fashion.

Signed:

Name: Stephen Elphick
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 13th October 2017