Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: Tauheedul Education Trust (TET)

Company number: 07353849

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Tauheedul Education 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.

Improving educational standards
We have ensured that resources are directed where they will be effective in meeting educational requirements, for example by targeting resources to support the Tauheedul Islam Boys' High School in securing outstanding teaching & learning and leadership & management. The Trust was delighted when the school achieved 'Outstanding' in all categories – a remarkable achievement for a new school.

We have implemented an induction programme for the 2 new Olive schools, which opened in September 2013. The programme focussed on securing the implementation of the Tauheedul Quality Standards; encompassing teaching & learning, leadership & management, curriculum & achievement, behaviour & safety as well SMSC.

Through the provision of experienced Quality Assurers and implementation of its school improvement framework, the Trust continues to provide a highy personalised improvement programme based on a comprehensive needs assessment.

We have ensured that each of the schools within the MAT has a rigorous achievement and attainment management and tracking system. This has ensured outstanding attainment in all MAT schools and demand for 2014-15 places far exceeded supply. We have undertaken a group-wide review of our intervention programmes (including summer school, weekend classes and holiday learning provision) to ensure that they are focused on securing quality, reducing in-school variation as well as the achievement gap between vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

We have worked with our schools to refresh their Strategic Development Plans and self-evaluation forms.

Robust governance and oversight of Multi Academy Trust finances
The Trust has established robust guidance within the Trusts Financial Management Handbook. The Trust has also developed a Financial Procedures Manual to ensure segregation of duties, uniformity and consistency across all schools within the Trust. The Trust benefits from the provision of a suitably qualified Financial Controller. He holds regular meetings with all 3 free schools within the Trust. He has also been working very closely with the Principals for the 3 new free schools due to

open in September 2014 to ensure a viable and sustainable budget and long term finance plan has been devised and approved by the Local Governing Bodies. These have all been signed off by myself as the Accounting Officer as well as the respective Local Governing Bodies.

The Trust has also commissioned an independent strategic financial management advisor for high level support to the schools. During these visits there will be compliance and health checks reviewing key policies, systems and procedures, with reports presented on compliance to the Head of the school as well as the Financial Controller for the Trust. Baker Tilly has been commissioned as the Internal Auditors for the Trust, with 4 internal audits carried out during 2013-14 covering budget monitoring, payroll, recruitment and Governance. The internal audit reports highlighted the strong practices in place at the schools as well as a number of low risk recommendations. Any recommendations from the internal audits have been actioned at both the school level and across the Trust. The internal audit reports were presented to both, the business committees for the schools as well as the Audit Committee for the Trust. A 3 year internal audit plan is in place to cover a vast programme of areas during a time of rapid growth for the MAT. The Trust also receives support throughout the year from its external auditors on compliance and accounting practices.

The Business Committee of each school receives detailed financial information for their termly meetings and the full governing body approve the budget plan annually. They are mindful of the need to balance expenditure against income to ensure the sustainability of their respective schools and to ensure the Trust remains a 'going concern'. The members of the trust meet with the external auditors annually to review and scrutinise the annual accounts and our external auditors' management report and to approve the annual accounts.

The Financial Controller reports back the financial position at a school and trust level to myself, as the Accounting Officer, on a regular basis. In addition, a formal termly report is prepared for the trustees and provided to the Governing Council.

Better Purchasing

The Trust ensures a continual focus on best value for money and clearly understands the importance of the efficient and effective use of its resources. Our schools and Trust promote fair competition through quotations and tenders, in accordance with its financial regulations, to ensure that goods and services are secured in the most economic and effective way. Where possible, the Trust has secured single supplier contracts, through competitive tender, for areas where a single supplier is appropriate for our schools i.e. insurance, payroll, ICT software licences and internal audit. This has considerably reduced the cost of this provision to schools. For 2014-15, the trust has re-tendered the payroll service and has changed providers which will achieve cost efficiencies. Also, further service level agreements will be agreed across the Trust for HR services, trips management system, SIMs support and virtual learning environment.

The budget holders review and sign off every purchase order request and regularly challenge these for efficiency and effectiveness. In turn the Governing Body regularly reviews the functions of the school, challenging how and why services are provided as appropriate. On an annual basis, the Governing Body reviews and signs off the contracts and Service Level Agreements the school are entering into for the upcoming year. Benchmarking exercises are carried out for cost comparisons and to ensure value for money.

Maximising income generation

The Trust is mindful of the need to generate additional funds to maximise income generation. Due to the temporary nature of the current school sites, income generation from lettings has been challenging, however, once the schools move into their permanent sites, the plan is to utilise the

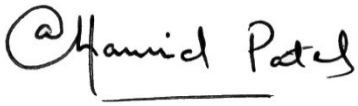
premises to ensure the community benefits from the extended services provided by carefully vetted voluntary and community support groups as well as providing an income stream for the schools. The schools ran a number of fund raising events throughout the year, both for charity and to generate income for their respective schools. The income generated for the schools is used to help support the wider curriculum and give further opportunities to all children that are not possible through the schools budget allocation.

Reviewing controls and managing risks
Business Continuity Plans, Risk Management Policies and risk registers have been devised at both the Trust and school level. These have been approved by the Local Governing Bodies with the risk register reviewed termly at the Business Committees.

The Head teacher and Head of Finance & Business Services review budget monitoring reports, considering expenditure against each budget cost centre monthly and address any significant variances against budget. The Business Committee review and check these reports on a termly basis, with an overview provided to the Local Governing Body for the respective school and to the Governing Council for the Trust.

The Business Committee reviews and approves the financial regulations and scheme of delegation detailing the finance related systems and procedures and other key financial policies. There is full segregation of duties within each school office.

Lessons Learned
A Trust wide investment strategy will be devised to ensure that returns on pooled reserves are maximised. Service level agreements and contracts are under review annually to continually look at best value and efficiency savings. In-house catering provision will be developed to provide improved nutritional meals at better value when schools move into their permanent sites.



Hamid Patel
Accounting Officer - TET