

# Value for Money Statement

**Academy trust name: The Collaborative Academies Trust**

**Academy trust company number: 8168307**

**Year ended 31 August 2014**

I accept that as Accounting Officer for The Collaborative Academies Trust (CAT) 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 Results***

*Our aim is to develop students who are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. We achieve this through ensuring competence in basic skills, embedding values, understanding of the wider world, a set of personal skills and capacities as well as accreditation of knowledge and understanding of subject disciplines.*

*On conversion our schools have undertaken an analysis against our Features of Highly Effective Schools document – the Collaborative Quality Analysis. This helps to shape priorities against the five areas of the EdisonLearning Design for School Improvement and informs the school development plan. Our schools then work collaboratively with CAT Academy Learning Advisers and EdisonLearning Achievement Advisers through a number of individual and network development days.*

*School Improvement work is based on particular needs identified in the school development plan and is delivered through a range of employees, partners, advisers, consultants and companies as appropriate or where best value is gained through our tripartite agreement with EdisonLearning and the DfE.*

*Impact is quality assured through the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) review half termly, the termly SIP ( School Improvement Partner) visits and the termly Team around the School meetings (TArSc group). A primary report card approach is in development for next year.*

*All the Headteachers of the schools in the Trust, along with the Chief Education and Operations Officer, the Chief Finance Officer, Academy Learning Advisers and a member of the Trust Board, meet termly to discuss opportunities for all or individual schools and to reflect on*

*barriers to success.*

*In the Summer of 2014 our Academies enjoyed varied success, highlighting the contexts in which those schools find themselves. However, the majority can point to continued progress from 2013 and in some cases have optimism for upcoming inspection judgements.*

*Full academic data is contained in the Trustees Report 2014 but highlights are the sustained performance of Manor Court Community Primary School in Chard, Somerset and Wellesley Park Primary School in Wellington, Somerset. In addition, Kingsthorpe College in Northampton closed the gap with national standards by about 9% whilst achieving their best ever GCSE results.*

*Spring Lane and Lumbertubs Primary schools in Northampton were both subject to inspection and work continues at both schools to improve outcomes. The appointment of a new experienced Headteacher at Spring Lane with added responsibility, a substantive Academy Learning Adviser for both schools in addition to existing sponsor support and the continued placement of a coach/mentor with governing bodies are part of the Trust adding to their school support offer and capacity in the area.*

*The winning of a competitive bid to open a new provision primary academy in Bridgwater, Somerset has allowed us to add to capacity in this region through the appointment of high quality staff and leaders who have been able to support other schools.*

*The Trust saw improved attendance and behaviour statistics widely in Trust schools during the year.*

*Further investment in approaches to improvement include partnerships with Angel Solutions to provide a suite of management tools contained in their Perspective product and the ability to see these in a Trust wide view in the Observatory tool, the partnering with the Whole Education group to provide further access to outstanding and innovative practice, the provision of SATs practice material through SATS Interactive, work with RM Books on a literacy initiative and the commissioning of other bespoke consultancy and improvement services including 'mocksteds' from inspectors employed by Babcock.*

### **Financial governance and Review of controls**

*The Trust finances are overseen by a qualified Chartered Accountant who acts as the Principal Finance Officer.*

*The Trust sets budgets at school level that are currently one year in length and regularly reviews areas of risk including the number of children on roll, projected admission numbers in future years or changes to funding streams.*

*Monthly management accounts are presented to local governing body meetings for review and exception reporting takes place at board level.*

*The Trust has issued consistent financial procedures across all its schools. This allows the Trust to easily review internal control procedures and a monitoring function is now undertaken by an independent accountant appointed in an internal audit capacity. The first visits will take place in the Autumn term 2014.*

*All schools have authority delegated to them as set out in the financial procedures document. Spending levels are set that require governor or trust agreement and due process for quotes and tendering. Staffing resource is reviewed regularly and where the staffing structure has changed this is authorised by the Local Governing Body (LGB).*

*The Trustees have taken part in a Risk workshop during the year and now have a 12month, 12-24 month and 24-36 month risk register that is monitored regularly.*

### **Better Purchasing**

*The schools review contracts on a regular basis. Savings have been made on the renegotiation of reprographics at schools across the trust, and these types of contracts are signed off at Board level. Bench marking exercises for utilities and cleaning have been undertaken by the Schools Buying Club in addition to the procurement of Trust wide HR and Payroll services through competition.*

*The Trust seeks to gain best value from joining together collaboratively to purchase legal, HR and Insurance services. The Trust have been tied into an insurance agreement for three years, and although this has been beneficial to some schools it will be looking to enter the academies Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) when this ceases in October 2015.*

*The Trust expects all its schools to compare prices whenever it is considering purchases. If items fall within certain limits then three quotes must be requested and for larger projects there is a formal tendering process. Many schools upgraded their I.T during the summer and all received three competitive quotes that were then discussed at LGB meetings before being also reviewed by the CFO.*

*All school purchases requiring three quotes must present a report on the academic objectives, the expected outcomes and the monitoring of those, as well as the financial options on the purchase of the equipment.*

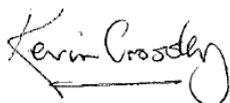
### **Better Income generation**

*The Trust currently generates income from money on deposit and has a limited scope to increase income generated in other ways.*

## **Lessons Learned**

*Schools in local geographic areas need to help each other. This is especially seen where schools are struggling to improve. The ability to increase capacity and take advantage of staff changes can be key to the future of some of our schools. Building capacity with outstanding staff takes time and the ability to use those staff to lead across more than one school in a geographic area is something the Trust is developing in all regions.*

**Signed:**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Crossley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Name: Kevin Crossley**  
**Academy Trust Accounting Officer**

**Date: 15/12/2014**