

# Value for Money Statement

**Organisation name: Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College**

**Company number: 8100344**

**Year ended 31 August 2014**

I accept that as accounting officer of Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College 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 Governing Body is accountable for the way in which the school's resources are allocated to meet the objectives set out in the school's development plans.

Governors need to secure the best possible outcome for students, in the most efficient and effective way, at a reasonable cost. This will lead to continuous improvement in the school's achievements and services.

Improving Educational Outcomes:

The Academy's vision is "Aspire, Learn, Achieve". It is the aim of the Academy to provide the very best learning and personal development opportunities for every young person that we serve. Our teaching and support staff are highly qualified, very skilled, and together share the strongest dedication to ensuring that all our students are safe, wholeheartedly enjoying their learning, and achieve their full potential.

We are keen to offer our students the opportunities to develop as confident, responsible and considerate individuals who excel and make a lasting contribution within and beyond their school life.

Our partnership with parents and carers is very important to us, and we work closely with them throughout a student's life to nurture their aspirations, their learning and their achievement.

The Academy has the following six strategic priorities:

- Raising Achievement for all - All individuals and all groups (including Pupil Premium (Ever 6, CLA, Service Child), Gifted and Talented, KS2 level 4 students, SEN, Gender) fulfil or exceed their potential.
- Re-imagining the Curriculum - A Curriculum where teachers are empowered to use their subject expertise to develop excellent programmes of study so that the needs and aspirations of our students are realised
- Improving Learning - A shared understanding of great learning which provides freedom to innovate and take risks, empowering teachers to lead and shape learning for all. Expectations of effective learning are stretched for all
- Developing Staff - A dynamic and aspirational culture in which staff are empowered to lead and shape the education of young people.
- Unlocking Student Potential - All students in school are empowered to take ownership of the development of their skills and their own learning through enhanced opportunities.
- Growing the School - To grow our profile and to maximise the resources available to the school so that we provide the best possible learning experiences for our students.

These priorities are the main drivers of all the Academy's operations and Governors apply the four principles of best value:

- Challenge - Is the school's performance high enough? Why and how is a service provided? Do we still need it? Can it be delivered differently? What do parents want?
- Compare - How does the school's student performance and financial performance compare with all schools? How does it compare with LA schools? How does it compare other academy schools?

- Consult - How does the school seek the views of stakeholders about the services the school provides?
- Compete - How does the school secure efficient and effective services? Are services of appropriate quality, economic?

when making decisions about:

- the allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the school
- the targeting of resources to best improve standards and the quality of provision
- the use of resources to best support the various educational needs of all students

This approach has underpinned the Academy's drive to improve educational outcomes for all its students and enabled it to be judged by OfSTED outstanding overall and in each of the four key areas:

- Achievement of Pupils
- Quality of Teaching
- Behaviour and Safety of Pupils
- Leadership and Management

The Academy's Sixth Form was judged to be especially outstanding by the inspection team.

Public examination results by our students were again excellent in 2013-14. These results are summarised below:

#### GCSE

- Attainment remains significantly above the national average.
- % of students achieving 5 A\*-C including English and Maths:
  - o 81% achieved this milestone (previous best was 77%)
  - o Second highest in Cheshire West and Chester
  - o Highest in Cheshire West and Chester based on first entry
- Record A\* grades
- Excellent Maths and English results in terms of all key measures (A\*-C, 3 levels of progress and 4 levels of progress).
- English and Maths results improved on 2013's high standards in all key measures.
- Pupil Premium gap continues to narrow in most areas. OfSTED during their inspection in March 2014 commented that:

"School leaders are making excellent use of pupil premium funding to ensure that eligible students receive the mentoring and targeted support they need to make accelerated progress. The gap between the attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals and that of others in GCSE English and mathematics is narrowing rapidly so that now they are approximately only half a grade behind their classmates. It is clear that school leaders pay close attention to the successful promotion of equality of opportunity for all."

- Special Educational Needs (SEN) - The attainment of students with SEN was significantly above the national average in 2013 and this continued in 2014.
- Gender gap-
  - o Girls outperform boys on all key measures
  - o Performance of the boys was slightly down on 2013 (except English)

#### A-level

- High levels of attainment compared to national averages:
- Attainment high relative to Local Authority schools and colleges:
  - o 100% pass rate
  - o Second highest average grades in Cheshire West and Chester
  - o Third highest A\*-B in Cheshire West and Chester
- Progress against targets was excellent for A\*/A and A\*-B. FFT A-C challenge narrowed.
- Completion rates, achievement rates and retention rates are good relative to national averages.
- 85% of students accepted into first choice university.

Our students continue to perform significantly above local and national average achievement rates.

Robust governance and oversight of Academy finances:

The Academy's Governors are committed to ensuring that governance of the Academy's financial management is robust. The Governing Body are cognisant of their responsibilities in ensuring that the Academy's resources are managed effectively, to enable the six key priorities:

- Raising Achievement for all.
- Re-imagining the Curriculum

- Improving Learning
- Developing Staff.
- Unlocking Student Potential
- Growing the School

to be achieved and to support the vision and aims of the Academy. The Academy's Governors, and staff strive for the best possible outcomes for pupils, achieved at reasonable cost.

The Resources Committee meets as often as is necessary to fulfil its responsibilities, and at least four times a year. The Committee has a Terms of Reference which is reviewed annually. The Committee includes the Head Teacher and members of the Governing Body with appropriate skills and experience. Further training is provided as required. The Resources Committee receives regular budget monitoring reports, provided in a consistent format and with explanatory notes: consider and ratify policies: scrutinise the Academy budget forecast: ensure that the Academy complies with agreed policies and procedures: and discuss spending proposals. The Committee considers the annual reports and financial statements of Academy, and makes recommendations to the Governing Body, who approve core financial statements and documents. The Committee is serviced by an experienced clerk.

The Resources Committee regularly review key financial policies and procedures which are contained in the Academy's Financial Management Handbook.

The Strategic Committee fulfils the audit committee function for the Academy. It meets at least three times per year. The Committee has a Terms of Reference which is reviewed annually. The Governing Body agreed a programme of regularity checks which were carried out on behalf of the Academy by Hall Livesey Brown (HLB) Accountants through an agreed Service Level Agreement. This programme was designed to review the effectiveness of internal controls to ensure that the aims, objectives and key performance targets of the Academy are achieved in the most economic, effective and efficient manner The Committee received a termly regularity report from HLB, which it considered and ensured that actions recommended were complied with.

All Governors and senior staff complete a Register of Business Interests form annually.

Ensuring that the Academy gains good value for money, and effective and efficient use of resources:

The Academy takes a prudent approach to expenditure. As the largest single expenditure item within the Academy's budget is staffing, the staffing structure is reviewed annually to ensure that it is fit for purpose and can adapt and respond to support the successful attainment of the six strategic priorities:

- Raising Achievement for all.
- Re-imagining the Curriculum
- Improving Learning
- Developing Staff.
- Unlocking Student Potential
- Growing the School

Creative use of human resources demonstrates a commitment to using staff skills effectively, and staff are encouraged to use their particular areas of expertise to enhance pupil outcomes.

The Academy has a strong CPD programme which is aimed at developing staff to improve student outcomes. The Academy's staff are subject to an effective performance management system. Capability issues are addressed through the use of appropriate policies which are implemented with support from Cheshire West and Chester's HR Business Partners. Staff absence is carefully monitored and staff are supported through the use of Occupational Health and application of the Managing Sickness Absence Policy to maintain good attendance levels.

The Academy payroll is undertaken by Cosocious, and detailed monthly reconciliations of payroll ensure that payments to staff are correct.

Purchasing follows best value principles. A scheme of delegation is in place. Governors and Senior Leadership Team recognise that the pursuit of minor improvements or savings is not cost effective if the administration involves substantial time or costs. Time wasted on minor improvements or savings can also distract management from more important or valuable areas.

The following thresholds and measures are applied to procurement decisions taken by the academy:

- competitive tendering procedures (e.g. for goods and services above £50,000)
- minimum of 3 quotes for purchases greater than £5,000 but less than £50,000

- procedures which minimise office time by the purchase of goods or services under £5,000 direct from known, reliable suppliers (e.g. stationery, small equipment)

EU procurement regulations are complied with. Governors and staff accept that best value quotes may not be the cheapest as other factors, including workmanship, reliability and quality of services, need to be considered.

The Academy's Finance, ICT, and Estates Teams takes an active approach in reducing costs, whilst maintaining the Academy's infrastructure is fit for purpose.

The Finance Team take a proactive approach to sourcing high quality supplies and services at the most competitive price.

The skills of the ICT Team are utilized to minimise the need for external consultants. For example the Academy's ICT infrastructure is based upon a virtual server environment which was developed, implemented and is maintained by the Academy's Strategic ICT manager.

The Academy buildings require continual maintenance as a result of their age and condition. The Estate Manager assesses major maintenance works before work is put out to tender, and where possible the Academy's skilled staff undertake repairs, maintenance and decoration to reduce the use of external contractors.

Recent initiatives to reduce costs made by these teams are:

- Reduction of energy bills by conversion from Fuel Oil to Gas to heat the site, a projected in year saving of £21,000.
- Implementation of a VOIP telephone system to reduce maintenance and phone costs
- Scrutiny of service contracts to ensure providers are held to account for the quality and effectiveness of their service

Partnerships:

The Academy has strong collaborative links with its partner primary schools, which have formed the Sandstone Partnership, to further the development of educational and CPD opportunities for all members stakeholder groups.

Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College is a strategic partner in the Cheshire Leadership and Teaching Alliance, working as part of the partnership to develop the next generation of teachers, school leaders and school improvement partnerships.

The Academy is also working with Chester University as part of their School Direct programme, recruiting and educating candidates to become qualified teachers in partnership with the University.

The Academy also is a member of REAP collaboration with three other secondary schools, Bishop Heber, Christleton, and Neston. This partnership has a strong focus on CPD and sharing best practice across the participant schools to drive forward improvement.

Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College is a member of a Science Learning Partnership led by The Chimney House Teaching School Alliance and has established a Cheshire West and Chester Science hub which based at Tarporley High School and Sixth Form College. This operates as a part of The Chimney House Alliance.

Maximising income generation:

The Academy has a Lettings policy in place and explores opportunities to generate income through the hire of the site. A proactive approach is taken towards preparing funding bids and generating revenue streams in order to maximise income generation. In order to enhance its chances of success of obtaining funding for refurbishment and / or replacement of buildings, the Academy is working closely with an experienced consultant (Jay Ashall Associates) to prepare site development bids to the Education Funding Agency.

Reviewing controls and managing risks:

The Governing Body undertakes a financial risk assessment annually, and maintains a business continuity plan to address different levels of potential disruption to the normal business operations of the Academy. The areas covered by this risk assessment are as follows:

1. Governance
2. Financial Planning and Budgetary Control
3. Payroll

4. Purchasing Arrangements
5. Payment of Invoices
6. Petty Cash Imprest
7. Inventory/School Assets
8. Income
9. Data Security
10. Insurance

The Governors have implemented a number of systems to assess and minimise these risks as part of its processes for internal controls. Where significant financial risk still remains they have ensured that adequate insurance cover is in place.

**Lessons Learned:**

In its second year as an Academy, the Governors and Senior Leadership Team have maintained continuity of services to reduce the operational impact of the conversion process which took place in August 2012. However, as Cheshire West and Chester Council reduces the number of services available to academies in areas such as catering services and cleaning, it will be necessary to increase emphasis on effective tendering processes in order to source appropriate and effective service providers.

It is likely that the national financial climate in coming years will present challenges, and the Academy will endeavour to make savings through effective purchasing, working with purchasing consortia (such as the Crescent Purchasing Consortia) and other academies to gain economies of scale and take every opportunity to obtain value for money in order to improve outcomes for pupils.

**Name:** Ms Sarah Lee  
**Academy Trust Accounting Officer**

**Date:** 15 Dec 2014