

# Value for Money Statement

**Organisation name: Stanway Federation**

**Company number: 7887953**

**Year ended 31 August 2014**

I accept that as accounting officer of Stanway Federation 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 Stanway Federation comprises The Stanway School, Thomas Lord Audley School, Monkwick Junior School and Monkwick Infant and Nursery School. It is intended that St Michael's Primary and Nursery School will join the Federation in December 2014. We are confident that the significant number of first choices for Year 7 in both secondary schools indicates the high level of confidence of our parents that The Stanway Federation delivers value for money. Indeed the numbers of first choices for each school for AY2015 is the same as for AY2014 even though there are fewer children within the Colchester area.

## Improving Educational Outcomes

The Academy Trust has a well-planned strategy to invest its resources to ensure that educational standards continue to improve and to ensure each individual student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Academy Trust has reviewed its staffing structure to ensure staff are efficiently deployed. At Thomas Lord Audley School additional staff have been deployed in English and Maths to meet needs and improve standards. An additional Admin Assistant will be employed in September 2014 to co-ordinate the increased rewards budget to improve educational outcomes for all students including those entitled to Pupil Premium funding.

Cross-school CPD has been arranged for the second year between several schools in the area to share best practice and to drive costs down. For example, arranging a shared CPD course cost £1,000 including travel enabled us to reduce costs from around £350 + travel to around £150 per person. These very well received courses include categories such as Effective Middle Leadership and Aspiring to Assistant Headship. It has also enabled us to respond more quickly to specific needs and new challenges. For example, research has been carried out into all GCSE English syllabi with a view to sharing the resources of a common examination. It is intended that this very successful approach will continue next year.

The Trust has identified students with differing needs by offering a diverse programme of one to one tuition, small group interventions, gifted and talented events, revision clubs, etc. Pupil Premium funds have been used to fund additional support for students in Maths and English as well as mentoring, counselling, small group tuition, breakfast clubs, subsidised curriculum trips, subsidised uniform, literacy intervention, amongst others. Over the past 3 years the gap between children on free school meals and those not eligible is closing. At Stanway in 2012 36% of PPG students made 3 levels of progress in English; in 2014 it increased to 61%. In Maths it increased from 53% to 61%. At Thomas Lord Audley School the gap is closing at KS3 and remains a current focus for KS4.

## The Stanway School 2013-14

1. 60% of students achieved 5 A\*-C, including E/M. However, achievement in all core subjects is above national average. (The 2014 cohort entered the school broadly in line with the national average KS2 point score on entry.) Maths secured excellent results with 76% A\*-C, Science 71% (those students achieving 2 or more passes at GCSE) and English 69%. Unfortunately, a small but significant minority of students seem to have been affected by the way in which English was assessed. This reflects the national picture which shows a variation in results. Therefore, this has had an impact on the percentage of students who achieved both English and Maths at C grade or above

2. 70 % students made 3 LP in English; 78% students made 3 LP in Maths.
3. 24% students made 4 LP in English; 37% students made 4 LP in Maths.
4. 91% lessons are good or better.
5. Whole school attendance figure has improved by 0.68% to 95.06%. Nearly all key groups of students, including those students with SEN, CLA and G & T improved their attendance. However, the attendance of students who receive the PPG stayed broadly the same. The PA figure has improved from 6/09% in 2013 to 5.05% in 2014.

#### Thomas Lord Audley School 2013-14

1. 39% of students achieved 5 A\*-C, including E/M. The 2014 cohort entered the school with a KS2 point score on entry significantly below the national average. Maths and English achieved 48% A\*-C. Unfortunately, a small but significant minority of students seem to have been affected by the way in which English was assessed. This reflects the national picture which shows a variation in results. Therefore, this has had an impact on the percentage of students who achieved both English and Maths at C grade or above
2. 53% students made 3 LP in English; 50% students made 3 LP in Maths.
3. 19% students made 4 LP in English; 20% students made 4 LP in Maths.
4. 70% lessons are good or better.
5. Whole school attendance figure has improved by 1% to 94%. Nearly all key groups of students, including those students with SEN, CLA and G & T improved their attendance. However, the attendance of students who receive the PPG stayed broadly the same. The PA figure has improved from 7.05% in 2013 to 6.7% in 2014. There have been no permanent exclusions for at least 3 years. Percentage of fixed term exclusions is below the national average.

#### Monkwick Infant School

There is evidence of an increase in boys' reading for enjoyment and the introduction of a reward scheme as increased the number of boys and girls reading at home. An Attendance Officer has been successfully employed to improve attendance and persistent absence figures.

1. Year 1 gender gap has reduced to 4% between girls and boys working at and above age related expectation.
2. Year 2 gender gap has reduced from 16% to 9%.
3. Persistent absence has improved from 10.79% to 8.65% although the overall attendance remains about the same.

Every class teacher has identified the pupils entitled to Pupil Premium. This has enabled a planned programme specific to each pupil using Pupil Premium Funds.

The Headteacher is a member of the Primary Heads Consortium who meet regularly to discuss best practices, new initiatives and joint training.

#### Monkwick Junior School

The school underwent HMI Inspections in September 2013 and January 2014. The recruitment of an Attendance Officer and the introduction of weekly attendance initiatives have proved successful.

1. Combined Level 4+ reading, writing and mathematics standards in Year 6 rose to 63%.
2. Whole school attendance has improved from 93.61% in 12/13 to 95.76% in 13/14.
3. Persistent absence has improved from 13.4% to 4.4%
4. Attendance for SEN pupils has improved significantly and is now 95.39%, which is 2% higher than the national average.

Another school within the Federation provides some PE teaching which enables us to provide PPA cover. This has proved a very successful arrangement as we have not had to purchase supply cover externally. Our ICT maintenance is also provided centrally by the Federation, again saving money on an external provider.

The Academy Trust is part of the North East Essex Educational Partnership (NEEEP), a group of 8 secondary schools working to improve standards throughout the partnership. Various initiatives have been undertaken, including the development of Strategic Groups focussing on Teaching and Learning, Maths, English, etc with the stated aim of improving results for all children across the Partnership. Percentage students in partner schools achieving 3 levels of progress were 75% in English and 63% in Maths. Percentage of students achieving 4 levels of progress in English and Maths were 35% and 27% respectively.

The Business Manager at one of the schools was tasked one day per week to benchmark costs in member schools with a view to cost savings/improvements in service. The Federation schools and another school in the Partnership have benefitted from joint procurement in 2014 on a major ICT upgrade. There have also been year on year savings for NEEEP members in accountants, financial software, ICT purchases, grounds maintenance contracts, etc.

#### Financial Governance and Oversight

The Finance and Audit Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Academy Trust has a strong internal audit function. A Trustee is designated as Responsible Officer and the Academy Trust commissions an external auditor to carry out reviews of the internal controls, financial policies and to ensure compliance with legislation and regulations on an annual basis. The Trustees review these reports and action plans are prepared and monitored to ensure that the internal control framework remains robust.

The Headteachers are also Trustees and attend, where possible, all Trustee meetings, including sub-committees. This ensures they are fully aware of all expenditure from a whole-school perspective.

The Trustees ensure that the Accounts Return and Budget Forecast Return are completed within the deadlines of the Education Funding Agency and that the Audited Accounts are available on the Academy's websites.

The Trustees approve the Budget on an annual basis and receive monthly monitoring reports prepared on an accruals basis. All budget holders receive monthly reports for the budgets for which they are responsible and are fully aware of the purchasing limits contained in our Financial Regulations. The Trustees also receive and approve the annual report and accounts and the Audit Management Letter. All points raised in the Management Letter are discussed and an action plan is prepared to address any recommendations.

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Membership of NEEEP has enabled us to benchmark our costs against other schools within the partnership. This has led to savings in accountants, financial software, ICT hard and software to name a few areas. In the current year the group has achieved £246K collectively through year-on-year savings for major items such as IT equipment, ground maintenance, etc.

At NEEEP meetings future major purchases are identified to establish whether other schools are intending to make similar purchases. The schools concerned then are able to negotiate joint purchases. Major purchases made by any of the NEEEP schools gives others the opportunity to share best practice.

#### Better Purchasing

The Stanway Federation academies regularly check with each other and with other academies in relation to supplier experience to challenge whether suppliers are providing value for money.

The Academy Trust has a procurement framework in place which ensures that formal tender processes or 3 supplier quotes have to be obtained at set limits.

Tender processes were undertaken for the following:

Replacement part of the roof at Thomas Lord Audley School.

New toilet facilities at Monkwick Infant and Nursery School

Conversion of a classroom at The Stanway School

Lighting and ceiling works at Thomas Lord Audley School

A tender has gone out through the Essex Framework as part of an on-going refurbishment and expansion at Monkwick Infant and Nursery School.

3 quotes were obtained for:

Resurfacing of the tennis courts at Stanway School

Electrical works in the workshops at Thomas Lord Audley School

Creation of a new ICT server room at Thomas Lord Audley School

Cashless catering at both Stanway and Thomas Lord Audley Schools

In addition a process of bidding is in place to purchase additional resources which show a direct link to school development.

The Academy Trust has benefitted from joint procurement with NEEEP on accountants, insurance and financial software saving around £260,000 collectively. The Academy Trust also pays, where possible, for its supplies and services by BACS, resulting in efficiency and stationery savings amounting to approx. £3000 per year. The Academy Trust has made considerable cost and efficiency savings by the employment of a cross-Federation Bursar.

#### Maximising Income Generation

The Academy Trust regularly seeks to secure additional funding through grant applications. Successful applications during the year include:

A capital grant to replace the roof of F and G Blocks at Thomas Lord Audley School

A grant from Essex County Council to reinstate the kitchen facilities at Monkwick Infant and Nursery School

Applications will continue to be made for CIF funding in the future.

Additionally, the Academy Trust's premises are hired to the local community. It is the Bursar's responsibility to ensure that all income due is received when due. Cash flow is monitored closely and surplus bank balances are deposited in high yield fixed term deposits to maximise return on investment, capitalising on 'special' interest offers from our bankers where possible. For example by depositing surplus funds on a high yield term deposit Stanway School and Thomas Lord Audley School have improved returns from 0.1% in our current accounts to up to 1.1% depending on the period of investment.

#### Reviewing Controls and Managing Risks

The Academy Trust's Budget Holders receive a monthly budget report enabling them to monitor and control expenditure for the areas for which they are responsible. Any overspends compared to budget are investigated and action taken as necessary. The Academy Trust has compiled a risk register which is reviewed annually and updated by the Trustees so that mitigating action can be taken if required. The Academy Trust has taken advice from an insurance specialist to ensure that sufficient insurance cover is purchased for all sites. Two co-Headteachers have been appointed to The Stanway School from within the Federation. This appointment follows a planned strategy to ensure continuity, maintain the impetus for improvement and addresses the need for succession planning. The appointment also gave the opportunity to benefit from coaching and support from an experienced Headteacher until his retirement at end August 2014.

#### Lessons Learned and Action Plan for 2014/15

New working practices as an academy are now bedded in. The collaboration with NEEEP has been invaluable both in terms of sharing best practice and achieving cost savings and benefits.

The Academy Trust is committed to delivering good value in the use of public resources and will continue to review its operations. Key areas for development in 2014/15 are:

ICT - continued investment in ICT infrastructure.

Cashless Catering - Thomas Lord Audley School will introduce cashless catering in October 2014 following its successful introduction at The Stanway School. This is intended to increase the take-up of free school meals, keep parents informed of their children's purchases and will avoid the need to identify those on free school meals at point of sale.

Cleaning Contract - a re-evaluation of the contract and look at the feasibility of directly employing our cleaners.

Benchmarking - Continue to challenge and compare costs with other schools in NEEEP and elsewhere.

Primary Coach - Will be appointed from September 2014 giving targeted support to Primary and Infant schools, focussing on both teaching and learning.

**Name:** Ms Helena Boast  
**Academy Trust Accounting Officer**

**Date:** 10 Dec 2014