

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: St Laurence School Academy Trust

Company number: 7698410

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of St Laurence School Academy 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.

The Academy Trust is committed to:-

1. Raising student attainment.

In 2014 there was a marked improvement in KS4 outcomes, regaining a level of performance which reflects the quality of teaching, commitment of staff and ability profile of our students.

The key indicators demonstrate this trend of improvement:

- 77% achieved 5A*-C including English & Maths, with equivalences (13% increase on 2013, 16% increase on 2012) (1% below target; 17% above 2013 national).
- English progress rose significantly: 88% expected progress (74% in 2013), (18% above 2013 national); 57% above expected (30% national in 2013). Attainment also rose significantly to 85% A*-C (from 73% in 2013). English APS is significantly above national.
- Maths progress rose significantly: 84% expected progress (68% in 2014)(14% above 2013 national); 43% above expected (national 32% in 2013). Attainment also rose significantly to 86% A*-C (from 71% in 2013). We believe Maths APS is now significantly above national.

There has been a significant improvement in the achievement of disadvantaged students, particularly in terms of progress in English and Maths, and we recognise the securing of this improvement as a key challenge. We continue to develop joined up systems of tracking and intervention in every year group, driven by senior leaders and relying on meticulous use of achievement data, in order to promote good and outstanding progress for all student groups. Our Anglican foundation is a key part of our ethos; Religious Education and spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements (SMSC) are strong.

RAISEonline (unvalidated), published in December 2014, shows value added significantly above national levels for all EBacc subject areas apart from Languages (which is at national levels), with English value added being in the 10th percentile and Maths on the 25th.

At A level attainment in 2014 was broadly similar to that in 2013, although achievement against target was less good, with 67% of all students were either on or above target, compared to 81% in 2013 (the prior attainment on entry was slightly lower this year).

The overall value added for "academic" subjects was 0.20 of an A level grade. 13% of candidates achieved at least AAB in 3 facilitating subjects, as in 2013. Achievement of able and gifted students was strong.

Average Point Score (APS) per student remained as 2013 for A level but rose significantly for vocational subjects, reflecting encouraging progress in attainment in BTEC assessment and results which compare well with those nationally. APS per entry fell slightly from 2013. This may reflect our insistence this year that the dropping of subjects during year 13 is only allowed in exceptional circumstances. Retention from year 12 to 13 is very high.

Full details are available on the St Laurence School website.

The school received a section 5 Ofsted inspection in February 2013. The school was rated as "good" overall and in every category. Inspectors highlighted the following:

- The wide range of courses and many varied additional opportunities that appeal to its students.
- Most teaching is good or better, and so the majority of student make good progress and achieve GCSE results which are better than average.
- A particularly high proportion of students gain A* or A grades in GCSE English and mathematics.
- Relationships throughout the school are strong and further enhanced by the (vertical) tutor group system.
- Students behave well and feel very safe in school.
- The students are offered an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
- Leadership and management, including that of the new Headteacher, are good. The governing body provides high quality support for the school's leadership team and sets appropriate challenges for the school.
- The sixth form is good. Examination results are above average and improving so that the vast majority of students are able to progress to their chosen pathways.
- The curriculum is broad and varied. The wide range of courses provides all students with opportunities to gain appropriate qualifications.

Full details are available on this link:
St Laurence School Ofsted Report January 2013

The school's Basic Skills Quality Mark was renewed in October 2013 after an onsite inspection of provision.

Targeted improvement:

In the light of development priorities from internal and external evaluations, national changes to curriculum / exam specifications and feedback from staff and students we have introduced some significant curriculum and organisational changes from September 2014. These changes affect the structure of the KS3 and KS4 curriculum, the distribution of time between subjects, the timetable cycle, lesson length (reduced from 75 to 60 minutes) and the structure of the school day (5 lessons instead of 4).

In response to the Ofsted report and our own self evaluation we are working to the following key improvement foci, as outlined in our whole school and team development plans:

Focus 1: Improving progress: the outcome targets are:

- Outstanding progress
- GCSE achievement: KS2-4 progress significantly above national average for all subjects
- AS and A2: all subjects showing value added significantly above national levels.

Focus 2: Improving the quality of teaching and learning: the outcome targets are:

Outstanding teaching: 100% teaching good / outstanding, 50% outstanding, developing in particular the following learning traits:

- 1) independence and interdependence
- 2) student making connections between subjects
- 3) student reflection on learning/metacognition
- 4) maintaining development of effective formative feedback

Focus 3: Improving assessment and tracking: the outcome targets are:

- Outstanding progress
- The progress of all groups of pupils, including those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the pupil premium provides support, show that they achieve exceptionally well.

Focus 4: Improving school leadership: the outcome targets are:

- Outstanding leadership
- All leaders have increased awareness of their own key development areas and are addressing these
- All leaders model outstanding features of leadership
- All leaders apply value for money approach to the management of resources

Focus on individual pupils:

Pupil Premium funding is directed towards raising achievement of target students by providing a comprehensive range of provision, including 1:1 tuition, purchase of specific resources and, where relevant, the use of off-site vocational courses.

There has been significant success in closing the gap between Pupil Premium and non PP students. We are pleased that the attainment of Pupil Premium students in 2014 compares favourably with national figures at 53% 5ACEM. Over 3 years (2012-14), the 5ACEM gap has been variable (-20, -28, -26). However, over the same period, the progress gap has closed dramatically in both English (-24, -29, -12) and Maths (-29, -43, -7). There is

still work to do in order to close the gap in some other subjects.

Details of our deployment of Pupil Premium funding can be found on this link:

<http://www.st-laurence.com/user/74/165099.pdf>

Year 7 “catch-up” funding is used to promote accelerated progress for target students by use of the Passport Maths programme and tailored Literacy provision.

Able and Gifted students are supported by a designated Coordinator, who supports teachers in incorporating challenge in lessons, tracks student progress and provides mentoring programmes for target students.

We have also set up a Reintegration Support provision to support students who need short term 1:1 support in re-focusing for particular lessons and for any returning from fixed term exclusion, in order to promote a smooth transition back into their regular timetable and prevent further disruption to their learning.

Collaboration:

The trust has engaged with other educational providers and experts to share delivery or good practice, and to drive up standards in a cost effective manner. This includes being part of the West Wilts Alliance of 7 local secondary schools and Wiltshire College. This grouping enables shared provision for vocational education and training opportunities for staff at all levels of the organisation. Team St Laurence (TSL), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Academy Trust, provides catering and cleaning services to the School and catering services to 2 local primary school. All profits due to TSL are gift-aided to the Academy Trust. The School also belongs to the PiXL organisation, which provides regular visits from a raising achievement advisor and access to a wide range of useful intervention strategies. St Laurence also belongs to the Bradford on Avon cluster of schools, within which collaboration to support educational experiences and outcomes for all local young people is increasingly effective.

Quantifying improvements:

Students’ academic progress in all year groups is assessed and monitored at regular intervals throughout the school year, using management information systems including SIMS and SISRA.

Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the team of Assistant Heads of House on a daily basis.

The school exceeded its attendance target for 2013-14: provisionally the year figure is 95.0% against a target of 94.8% (the 2012-13 figure was 94.5%). It is pleasing also that punctuality data has begun to show an improving trend.

The three year improvement in exclusion data has been continued. Students feel safe, safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and parents speak highly of the School on our own parent survey and Parent View.

2. Robust governance and oversight of Academy Trust finances:

The Trust’s financial performance has been strong with major building works being completed on budget and a healthy surplus to carry forward.

The Finance, Facilities and Environment Committee (FFE) receive budget monitoring reports at least 5 times per year.

The Full Governing Body approves the budget each year and is mindful of the need to balance expenditure against income to ensure the Academy Trust remains a ‘going concern’. The Governing Body also receives and approves the Annual Accounts and the External Auditors Management Report.

3. Ensuring the operation of the Trust demonstrates good value for money and efficient and effective use of resources:

The School regularly benchmarks financial performance against other academy trusts to demonstrate that the Trust provides good value for money.

Tender exercises are undertaken to ensure that high value contracts are assessed against the marketplace on a regular and to ensure that long term contracts (3 to 5 years) remain competitive. For example the School operates a trading subsidiary for catering and cleaning services the costs of which have been benchmarked in the market place and found to be very competitive (c£20k less than the nearest quote).

In July 2014 the school’s Investors in People award was renewed. The report highlighted:

- Well understood School mission and values that are very much at the heart of school activities, ambition and culture.
- Well-structured School Development Plan with clear 3 year objectives, and current year Focus Areas, and aligned strategies, action plans and success factors.
- New format Faculty and House Team Plans with Monitoring, Evaluation and Review (MER) fully integrated.

- A strong and genuine approach to staff professional development; the management, focus and evaluation of which embraces much good and innovative practice.
- An well-structured new teacher appraisal cycle aligned to the new government Pay and Appraisal Policies.
- A big focus in the restructuring of leadership responsibility and accountability within both SLT and middle leadership.

4. Maximising income generation:

The School explores every opportunity to generate income through hire of the School's facilities provided this does not impact on delivery of the curriculum.

5. Effective Purchasing:

The School has detailed and effective purchasing practices in place to ensure the budget is spent prudently and best value is achieved for all purchases. The School's Financial Procedures Manual details all relevant processes, to which all budget holders are expected to adhere and the School's Tendering and Purchasing Policy is approved by Governors.

6. Reviewing controls and managing risks:

Monthly budget monitoring reports are produced and reviewed by the Director of Finance & Operations and the Headteacher and any necessary remedial action taken to address any significant variances that may have an impact on the budget out-turn.

The School benefits from the provision by Wiltshire Council Accounting & Budget Support team of a Financial Controls and Assurances Service which reviews key financial policies, systems and procedures, including the use of tenders. The service includes quarterly reports to the Responsible Officer (RO), a non-employed member of the Governing Body, who then and presents these reports on compliance to the Strategy Committee.

Budget holders, management and governors receive regular budget reports which are scrutinised to ensure the most effective use of resources to meet the objectives of the trust.

The School has an investment policy to ensure maximum returns on surplus balances. This is reported to the governing body and best options discussed on a regular basis. The governors review the reserve levels of the Academy annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. The governors have determined that an appropriate level of free reserves should be maintained. The reason for this is to provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipt of grants and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies such as urgent maintenance and to plan for future capital projects.

Insurance levels are reviewed annually and used cost-effectively to manage risks.

Reviewing operations to maximise the use of resources:

The School's expenditure within each budget heading is reviewed regularly and adjustments made based on the effectiveness of strategies introduced in previous years, curriculum offer and any new strategies identified in the School Development Plan.

Name: Mr Fergus Stewart
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 17 Dec 2014