

# Value for Money Statement [DRAFT]

**Organisation name: Kings Langley School**

**Company number: 8271760**

**Year ended 31 August 2014**

I accept that as accounting officer of Kings Langley School 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 and Standards: Allocation of Resources

- As an Academy that works closely with our local authority, we have been delighted with their regular assessment of our financial management systems as being "outstanding". We have been asked to assist other schools with ensuring "best value" in terms of expenditure and procurement, specifically when linking expenditure plans with school improvement priorities. Governors are regularly provided with detailed financial reports showing expenditure and income against budget together with careful "benchmarked" analysis against other similar schools. This benchmarked analysis indicates that expenditure at the school under all headings is in line with or below matched expenditure in similar schools.
- Attendance figures for both staff and students have always been good, but following a rigorous but supportive drive on improving such figures further, attendance in all year groups can now be considered as "outstanding". Similarly, recruitment and retention in the sixth form has improved in the past 12 months enabling the school to run economically viable courses post 16.
- We have witnessed several years of consistently improving educational results with a recent Ofsted inspection citing all aspects of the school's leadership, management and governance as being "outstanding". Indeed, the governors were until recently one of only 36 bodies nationally to have received the national kitemark award for "Outstanding Governance".
- A disappointing fall in GCSE examination results in 2013 (reflecting national changes in pass grade boundaries) led to an immediate and decisive response from the school's leadership which resulted in excellent examination results in 2014 at both GCSE and Advanced Levels. These results are likely to place the school in the top 25th percentile of schools nationally. In particular, the outcomes for vulnerable students in these examinations was excellent and "pupil premium" students produced outcomes substantially above the national average and "closed the gap" considerably on students not in this category. In all of the past 7 years, the school has ensured that virtually all students leave school with at least 5 A\* - G GCSE qualifications ensuring the virtual elimination of any students not in education or training (NEETS).
- The school has a member of the senior leadership team with identified responsibility for ensuring that resources are spent carefully on ensuring that vulnerable students in all categories including those on free school meals are allocated financial and other resources to ensure that they are not disadvantaged because of their background.
- At the core of the school's improvement systems is a carefully and rigorously designed Performance Appraisal Management (PAM) system which directly links teacher's pay with national standards and student outcomes. A bespoke data management system (Bluesky) allows senior leaders to effortlessly match training needs and provision with specifically identified weaknesses. Evidence of progress is constantly cross-referenced with monitoring and assessment data, also recorded on the same IT management system. The school believes that this integrally linked monitoring and performance management system permits the efficient use of all resources, both human and financial, to ensure that they are always targeted at priority areas. The national providers of this system ask the school to provide input and evidence at national training events and related seminars as exemplars of best practice. Ofsted described PAM at the school to be "exemplary".
- One of the key reasons that the governors achieved the "outstanding" kitemark award is due to their insistence that the school regularly provides reports and presentations based around measurable assessment and other objective data. This enables them to map progress of identified areas and hence measure the impact due to the allocation of resources. A key part of this objective measurement of all activity in the school is an insistence on

regular benchmarking exercises with other similar schools in the East of England and all local secondary schools. The leadership of the school provides governors with regular training on how to use published data such as "RAISEonline" to enable them to effectively challenge and support the school.

- The wide professional expertise represented on the governing body ensures that the school's leadership has access to highly competent professionals from a range of applicable fields and that these professionals subsequently present searching and informed challenges covering all aspects of the school's provision. A recent audit of skills of the governing body has provided accurate evidence for future training and recruitment targets.
- As a direct result of the school's efficient management and leadership structure, Kings Langley was chosen by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to be the nominated lead school in the national PFI initiative for Priority Schools Building Programme.
- Since becoming an Academy, the school has constantly reviewed the quality and "best value" provided by all its service providers. This has resulted in new contracts being negotiated with external providers (for example, for catering and cleaning) and existing contracts for services from the Local Authority being renegotiated to ensure higher levels of service, often at reduced cost (for example, the service provided by the attendance support officers).
- Although the school considers the provision of high academic standards to be its core aim, the senior leadership and governors place equitable value on the development of individually responsible students who are able to exhibit a wide range of key virtues and characteristics in all circumstances. Parental support for the school's clearly communicated ethos and culture is measured via externally commissioned surveys and we are delighted to note the year on year increase in applications for places for admission to the school each September. Total applications have increased 4 fold in 8 years and recently stood at 650 applications for 186 places for September 2014.
- The school has been chosen by the Jubilee Centre in the University of Birmingham to be a lead school for its government sponsored work in developing "Strong Character" in UK schools. Kings Langley School is featured alongside 6 other schools (including Eton College and Wellington College) in a publication highlighting best practice in Character Development (published spring 2014).

#### Financial Management Systems

- The school benefits from the employment of a highly qualified and experienced school manager who is a key member of the senior leadership team. She is ably supported by a finance manager who is a fully qualified accountant.
- The governors insist on regular and appropriate inspection and scrutiny from externally appointed professional agencies. Detailed reports from commissioned accountants and legal advisers indicate proper adherence to all national standards of financial management, procurements and personnel management. Any areas of weakness are therefore quickly identified and swift and proportionate remedial action immediately taken. This same rigorous approach is applied to other management systems, such as child safeguarding, with such provision being described as "outstanding" by Ofsted in 2010.
- All financial arrangements are overseen by the governors' resources committee and the detailed minutes of these meetings highlight the level of information required from the school, specifically concerning benchmarking of income, expenditure and employee salaries. The school believes the level of scrutiny and quality control provided by this committee as being of an exemplary standard.

**Name:** Mr Gary Lewis  
**Academy Trust Accounting Officer**

**Date:** 08 Dec 2014