



Sandbach School Value for Money Statement For the year ended 31 August 2014

The accounting officer, Mrs Sarah Burns, accepts that she is responsible and accountable for ensuring that Sandbach School delivers good value in the use of public resources. The Accounting Officer is aware of the guide to academy value for money statements published by the Education Funding Agency in August 2014 and understands the accountability and responsibility for achieving the best possible value for money in their organisation which includes:-

1. The economic, efficient and effective use of all resources to produce better educational results.
2. The avoidance of waste and extravagance.
3. The prudent and economical administration of the organisation.
4. The establishment and maintenance of a system of financial governance, including sound internal spending controls, keeping up to date financial records, continuous financial monitoring and timely reporting.
5. Ensuring all financial transactions represent value for money.

Sandbach School is committed to continuously improving both the educational and wider societal outcomes for its pupils within the resources available.

1 Planning and Evaluation

The school has a detailed Raising Attainment Plan which it works against to monitor and deliver the key objectives that the school is working towards. The whole school plan is underpinned by individual departmental plans which reflect the key strands of the school plan and outline individual department's contributions and approach to ensuring that this is delivered. This plan enables the school to be focussing on delivering its key outcomes, and also to know where changes are necessary to ensure that objectives are delivered either due to changes internally within the school, or external changes within education or society. The detailed plan also enables the school to ensure that financial resources are targeted towards achieving priorities as agreed with school leaders and Governors.

2. Improving Educational Outcomes

Sandbach School has invested in student support coordinators which are focussed on the pastoral needs of the student. By focussing on attendance, behaviour and wellbeing, this structure ensures that student's opportunities to learn are maximised by having good attendance, being prepped and ready to learn in terms of equipment and attitude for learning, and the provision of direct support if there are any factors which may impact this.

There has also been investment during the year in Accelerated Reader and Maths programmes which will bring a benefit to all students.

Significant resource and time has been directed to raising marking standards in the school so that students are aware strengths, weaknesses and next steps in relation to their work. This investment is beginning now to have a direct impact on attainment.

The staffing structure of the school has been kept under review. Within core subject areas staffing levels have been realigned and strengthened to give students continuity of teaching.

3. Individual students

The school has worked hard over the year on its identification processes so that the less able receive additional targeted support via the learning support department, and so that

the most able receive appropriate challenge. The school is working to extend these practices further by the development of a Director of Community role which will work more closely with primary schools so that the abilities of incoming students are understood and so that plans are put in place accordingly when students start at the school for continued academic momentum.

In terms of students with special needs, the schools' recent Ofsted report recognised that progress of these students was as good as that made by all other students in the school. Similarly, the gap between disadvantaged students and all other students was recognised to be closing quickly.

4. Collaboration

Sandbach School works closely with the Chimney House Group, which is comprised of 12 schools across Cheshire East. This network allows for the sharing of skills, and identification of savings and financial efficiencies by working as a consortium. For example, the Chimney House Business Manager group have worked together to compare and benchmark their staffing structures to help to identify more efficient structures by learning from successful practices within other schools and sharing of resources where appropriate.

5. New Initiatives to maximise income generation

Sandbach School has a community business known as The Link which essentially represents the lettings and hire activity operated by the school. Significant advancements to develop The Link in terms of brand identity and awareness, marketing and service offer have been made during the year. The school generated £0.156m of income from this business during the year, and a further £0.091m of income from Adult Education services during the year.

6. Additional Educational Support

Summer schools run regularly to ensure that the most vulnerable students entering the school have the best possible entry into secondary education. Examination prep sessions are routinely delivered by a large number of curriculum areas in preparation for public examinations both after school and during school holidays. These have proven to be a vital strategy in securing the high levels of attainment achieved at Sandbach school.

7. Extra-curricular opportunities

The full program of sporting fixtures operated throughout the academic year provides students with many more opportunities to improve their sporting performance than almost any other state school in the North West. Similarly the wealth of extra curricular activities the school provides in relation to Music, Performing Arts, Orienteering, the Cadet Force, numerous foreign excursions help to provide a range of outstanding opportunities to enable students to become well rounded individuals.

8. Higher Education

For 2014, Sandbach School has zero NEETs and this trend has been consistent for the last four years. In 2014 79% of students applied to Higher Education through UCAS. 94% of these students have been placed, with 74% securing their first choice. Of those placed, 37% are studying at a Russell Group university. The school's recent Ofsted recognised the strength of the school's sixth form, identifying that it continues to flourish and that sixth form students provide outstanding contributions to the school.

9. Capital Grant Funding

The school has been successful in securing two capital funding grants over the last two years from the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund. The first grant in 2012/13 was for £0.192m for a toilet refurbishment programme. A further grant of £0.181m was secured in 2013/14 for the refurbishment of the school's Theatre Space. The school has a masterplan for its campus and will continue to apply to the Academies Fund in order to fulfil the strategy for the schools site.

10. Financial Governance and Oversight

During the year the school had 6 Finance Committee meetings. Given the complexities of managing the budget in a time where resources are reducing and costs are increasing, and the consequent staffing changes that have been necessary, it has been necessary to meet and consult with Governors more frequently. Governors receive monthly management accounts accompanied by an explanatory narrative. The school also receives quarterly Responsible Officer reports which evaluate the schools performance and use of systems and controls which are shared with Governors.

11. Staffing resources

During the year a support staff restructure was undertaken to ensure that all staff have an up to date job description that reflects their duties accurately. A new performance management system was also introduced for support staff so that staff are measured against their job descriptions and so that training needs could be identified.

For teaching staff, with national changes to pay and performance management processes, the school has worked with Governors to introduce an online performance management system known as 'Filio' which allows staff to upload evidence and documentation to support their pay progression. The process for reviewing teachers performance and subsequent progression continued to be a tightly controlled process where Governors discuss staff members in detail with the Headteacher and review evidence of their performance, before supporting any recommendations (or otherwise) for pay progression.

Mrs S I Burns

17th December 2014

Academy Accounting Officer



