

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: THE BATH AND WELLS DIOCESAN ACADEMIES TRUST

Company number: 8207095

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of THE BATH AND WELLS DIOCESAN ACADEMIES 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.

This has been our first full operating year with five additional primary schools joining the Trust during this time, with four of these being convertor schools.

1. Improving Educational Results

There has been continued focus on structure and recruitment into key central roles, in line with the growth of the Trust and recognition of the need to have centrally based in-house skills and resources enabling focus on monitoring and improvement of educational results for the growing organisation.

Recruitment for a full time CEO and Director of Learning and Achievement was commenced in the period; both were recruited with start dates of 1st September 2014, replacing the existing roles of part time CEO, Executive Principal and external school improvement consultants.

During the period the Trust used a combination of an Executive Principal, continued use of the services of Cambridge Education as its main education partner; this was supported by other external educational school improvement consultancy as required.

A number of training sessions were procured and delivered across all schools including, Pupil Premium training and Ofsted inspection update. These sessions aim to provide an efficient vehicle to introduce a consistent approach to the subject, in terms of Pupil Premium the effective use of and pupil premium reporting, utilising expertise from external and internal sources and from current HMI inspectors.

The Trust has introduced a number of measures to help with the development, training and performance management of staff at all levels this has included the introduction of:

- i) Mentoring for specific Head teachers to enable their continuous development and improve the leadership within the school.
- ii) Introduction of a system to oversee performance management and professional development of school staff.
- iii) Enhancing the NQT provision

2. Financial Governance and Oversight

The Trusts Financial Governance and control is hierarchical, the Trusts Board via the Audit and Finance committee, which includes the Accounting Officer and COO reviewing and approving Budgets and challenging quarterly consolidated management accounts.

During this period the Trust utilised the skills of one of the Trustees to act in the capacity of RO, performing reviews as specified by the Board of Directors, formally reporting back findings. Given the size of the organisation it is anticipated that external resource will be procured to provide this service for 2014/15.

The School budget is managed by the Head Teacher supported by the local School Finance Officer; these school level budgets are managed by the approval of annual budgets and the compilation of detailed monthly management accounts at each school, these are scrutinised and challenged by the Local Governing Body (LGB), and subject to review by the Trust Accountant and MAT Directors.

Capital projects are managed at local level via the LGB; with input and review from central resources to apply for funding and to ensure proper procurement and use of funds for these projects.

A new finance system PS Financials was introduced from September 2013, this has enabled improved reporting and controls. System access and role profiles are tightly managed by the central team to ensure segregation of duties, and web based authorisation workflow.

3. Purchasing

The Trusts purchasing policy dictates, depending on the level of expenditure, that the schools must go through a quotation process. These quotations are reviewed with a decision matrix, to assess the best use of resources, based on key requirements and outcomes as well as cost to the schools budget.

The schools keep all procurement documentation, this is subject to review and challenge by the LGB, the Trusts central team and the RO.

The majority of schools services are still procured at an individual school level. The central team at the Trust are starting to look at areas where a group approach to procurement will assist in the operations of the Trust as a whole, as well as gaining cost savings. Key focus here has been on IT infrastructure and software to enable improved collaboration within schools for educational, financial and administrative purposes, along with improved and consistent reporting.

4. Maximising the use of resources

Benchmarking has been introduced to compare the use of key resources across the schools within the trust, with a view to being able to identify and share best practice.

All schools with appropriate facilities actively let their premises to external clubs to generate additional revenue to support school activities.

Introduction of in-house school meals provision in our school which already had a full kitchen installed, this was introduced with the aim to find savings that could be passed onto parents to encourage school meal take up by the pupils; as well as improving nutritional awareness with parents and pupils.

Name: Mr Pete Mountstephen
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 08 Jan 2015