

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: Redditch West School Trust

Company number: 7967402

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Redditch West School 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.

Improving Educational Outcomes:

Examples of specific actions are:

- The Trust has used internal tight leader led action plans in addition to engaging the services of external School Improvement Advisors to support its work in improving educational outcomes. This has led to considerably faster progress and better outcomes for children.
- Across the trust phonics was a key issues and funds were used to create phonic groupings which has considerable impacted on results, and these are well above national and local as a result.
- Pupil premium funds have been well targeted to move children on and these pupils have made very good progress.
- Shared leadership and curriculum training, alongside sharing good classroom practice across the trust has led to impact beyond individual schools, raising the standards of teaching and learning and ensuring assessment outcomes are moderated, including with schools outside our Trust. As a consequence KS1 and EYFS results at our founder school are very high this year when compared to national and local figures.

Actions planned:

- Where weaker results or progress have been identified the capacity across our schools is now such that the relentless pursuit for excellence to move all children to at least national expectations across the Trust is the focus of our strategic plans.
- The schools engage in work with local cluster schools to create shared policies which aid transition and specific curriculum projects such as a more able film creation which resulted children creating a film of our schools to put on our website for prospective parents.

Better Purchasing

Examples of specific actions are:

- Contracts have been reviewed during the year to achieve the best mix of quality, pricing and effectiveness. Some contracts have been re-negotiated with the same supplier to obtain a better pricing structure, such as for the photocopier leases, while other suppliers have been changed to achieve better pricing and service.
- The catering operation of the Trust has grown rapidly leaving the existing supplier unable to offer a service that would best fit the needs of the school kitchen. An exercise was carried out to review the current suppliers and look at alternatives. The decision was to change to a new supplier who was competitively priced but also offered a more reliable regular service.
- The decision was made to move away from the Local Authority for the Property Services, moving to a smaller local organisation that can offer a more appropriate service to the Trust as a whole. This has produced a cost saving but also brought a more flexible service that has been tailored to the specific needs of the Trust.
- A benchmarking exercise was undertaken to compare the Trust against similar establishments. The key points compared to primary academies were the low overhead costs. Staff, insurance and maintenance cost were all lower than average per pupil. Total income and GAG income were also low compared to the average per pupil for similar schools.
- The Trust has carried out several tendering processes during the year to identify the best options for projects. Work on the roof has been done to eliminate leaks and repair water damaged ceilings. There has been some internal alterations to storage areas in line with fire safety, with the benefit of creating more versatile storage options.

- The Trust has been working hard to establish economies of scale using the joint buying power of the two schools. There has been limited success in many areas but there was a large saving to be made on the staff absence insurance. The contract was re-negotiated with the previous service provider with almost a fifty percent saving for the same level of service across the Trust. This remains an area for investigation to maximise value for money.

Maximising income generation

This is an area we are striving to improve on. Aspects looked at this year include:

- The Trust has tried to encourage outside users to use the schools out of hours. This has not been successful as there is a large middle school next door to one, and a larger high school close to the other. They are more attractive, offering a wide array of facilities out of hours. Both schools have managed some small scale lettings during the period but this only provides a small income.
- The catering operation has gone rapidly over the last year and with the introduction of the Universal Free School Meal the Trust has now doubled the number of meals it is producing. The income has been reinvested in upgrading equipment and taking on new members of catering staff.
- The Trust has investigated investing some of its reserves in deposit accounts. As the interest rates are still low, the return on investment has not justified locking funds away for the period of time needed. The Trust made the decision to keep some funds to be spent on planned building work. This building work has not yet taken place.

Name: Mrs Sue Foster-Agg
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 11 Dec 2014