

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: Sussex Educational Trust Limited

Company number: 7874411

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of Sussex Educational Trust Limited 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

Sussex Education Trust Ltd opened Chichester Free School on 9th September 2013 with 210 pupils spread across Reception, Year 1, Year 3, Year 7 and Year 8. We have not yet undergone an Ofsted inspection, nor do we have any Key Stage 2 or GCSE examination results. In Key Stage 1 our phonics results were below national pass rates but above our baseline predictions. In other years, external moderation of our internal marking and assessment suggests that pupils have made, on average, more than one years' academic progress in just twelve months. This is fantastic news and a great credit to both pupils and staff.

We have been able to achieve these results by investing in the following:

- A broad curriculum which not only focuses on traditional subjects, providing at least 30% of curriculum time for English and Maths, but also allows for creative thinking and improving knowledge and skills in areas such as public speaking, presentations and even survival skills. This included our own 'Challenge Programme' and Forest School for Primary pupils.
- The provision of a wide range of after-school activities to enrich pupils' school experience and help in their social and moral development. These included academic and sporting clubs. We are grateful for the links that we have made with sporting organisations such as Albion in the Community (Multi-sports) and Releasing Potential (Campcraft).
- Interventions both in the Primary and Secondary phases to ensure the specific needs of individual pupils are catered for and areas of weakness are identified early. This included the recruitment of additional Learning Support Assistants to facilitate this process.
- The provision of Saturday School to aid pupils who require more focus on foundation knowledge in Maths and English.
- We have invested heavily in our ICT infrastructure which has been purchased in the main through an ICT capital grant and followed the EFA's tendering processes. The capital grant has enabled us to encourage the use of new technology such as iPads and provided us with the means to allow all year 7 and 8 pupils to have their own iPad for study. This has been supported through additional parental contributions; and is a scheme we are keen to support for future years. Pupil Premium funding has allowed us to provide iPads to FSM children, ensuring they are not disadvantaged.
- Pupil Premium funding is targeted at the specific needs of the individual and not only include iPads, interventions and school meals but also extends to other provisions which aim to aid both the academic and social well-being of the individual concerned. Examples include music, drama and play therapy and school trips.
- Chichester Free School aims to develop a strong sense of community within the school. This is evidenced through

the use of an all-through house system to create a bond between year groups. The pastoral system extends to the secondary phase through vertical house tutor groups, house tutors and delivery of PSHE lessons.

- We have invested in our Gifted and Talented children by nominating a member of teaching staff to co-ordinate identification of these children and specific delivery of educational outcomes which will stretch them as required by their needs. These children are stretched as a matter of course in lessons, as well as through co-curricular activities and other events provided by staff such as maths challenges. We have also run Inset sessions on provision for Gifted and Talented children.

- Our staffing structure has been planned to enable the school to offer both breakfast and additional after-school care for working families. The staff day has been arranged to ensure that overtime costs are kept to a minimum by contracting staff to cover these periods.

- Supply costs have been kept to a minimum through the utilisation of teaching staff. However, we have worked hard to ensure that the quality of teaching is not adversely affected by using in-house resources.

- We purchased two minibuses in 2012/13 through capital grants but have funded an additional two minibuses through revenue in 2013/14. These allow us to participate in PE and inter-school fixtures, provide transport for choral performances, educational visits and also provide discounted transport for children to get to and from school, which is an essential part of our agreement with the EFA.

Financial Governance and Oversight

As a new school we have benefitted from a number of capital grants which have allowed us to set up in a temporary facility whilst our permanent site is developed over the next year. We have aimed to provide value for money in all purchases whilst also investing in equipment with a view to moving it to the new site. We have worked hard to ensure that the pupils do not feel that they have been disadvantaged in their academic achievements and learning environment by being in a temporary facility.

However, we have identified a need to improve our own tendering procedures and accept that a more robust purchasing system should have been adopted for the procurement of our furniture. This is an area the Principal, School Business Manager, Management Accountant and members of the Finance and General Purpose Committee are currently developing to ensure value for money will be achieved in the future.

Value for money within the trust has been obtained by making financial controls and operations a key area for development in the 2013/14 year. This has been achieved by:

- Regular meetings of the Finance and General Purpose Committee (F&GP) with key responsibilities being to assess the school's progress, monitor budgets and scrutinise proposed purchases and operational decisions to ensure the delicate balance of educational need and financial constraint is maintained.

- The recruitment of a qualified Management Accountant to manage the day-to-day finance function in-house and provide regular monthly reporting. Areas of overspend or underspend are identified in a timely manner, allowing the School Business Manager and Principal to assess how best to re-allocate resources as necessary.

- Independent review of financial procedures and controls to identify areas for improvement in the Trust. A direct result of the review was the purchase of Tucasi on-line payment software to aid in the recording of income from parents.

- The formalisation of a purchase order process ensuring appropriate levels of scrutiny for purchases and defining roles and responsibilities in the system.

I believe that in our first year Sussex Education Trust has delivered value for money to all stakeholders and that this has been a key part played in the significant success of the Trust educationally and socially in our first year. We will work to ensure that we enhance our value for money offering in future years.

Name: Mr Guy Martyn
Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 24 Dec 2014