

# Value for Money Statement

**Organisation name: Castle Community Trust**

**Company number: 7344616**

**Year ended 31 August 2014**

I accept that as accounting officer of Castle Community 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.

A. Improving educational results: What has the trust done to ensure that educational standards continue to improve for the benefit of pupils and wider society, and that all pupils have the opportunity to raise their individual levels of attainment? For example:

Warden House

1. Peer mentoring within and across schools has developed a culture of collaborative work where teachers observe one another teach and share / challenge one another's practice in raising standards.
2. A tight focus on the progress of pupils through rigorous tracking and Senior Staff meeting regularly with teachers to challenge slow progress.
3. Strengthening accountability of the Local Governing Board through increased governor monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Governors visit termly to run a triangulation exercise on key areas of school improvement.
4. An individualised CPD programme where teachers are awarded a training budget to develop a research based approach to learning. This has led to an heightened accountability of training and the sharing of key elements of CPD within and across teams.

As a result:

- o RAISE analysis demonstrates 100.5 value added for non-pupil premium learners and 101 value added for pupil premium learners, an improvement on 2013. This is above the national average of demonstrating the gap is closing significantly for our vulnerable groups.
- o RAISE analysis shows Pupil Premium learners are above national averages for value added in writing and in line with national averages for reading and maths.
- o RAISE indicates the school is operating above national expectations in all areas and significantly above in many.

Castle Community College

SchoolsCompany Ltd (SchoolsCompany) have been commissioned by the Governing Body of Castle Community College to secure and lead the school out of Special Measures by 2015-16.

The Executive School Improvement Team from SchoolsCompany have worked closely with the Governing Body of the school since the inspection. The Interim Executive Principal and the Director of Education have ensured that the school plan is in place to address the key issues and to provide advice and guidance to the governors in relation to the structure and the focus of the statement of action.

The Interim Executive Principal and the Director of Education have arranged support from the Local Authority who will be available to ensure the effective implementation of all aspects of the school plan and the monitoring of progress within it.

Quality of Teaching =

55% Good or Better December 2014

55% Good or Better October 2014

30% Good or Better March 2014

GCSE Summer 2014 Examination Results:

36% A\*-C Including English and Maths (19% increase on 2013)

HMI Monitoring Visit – September 2014:

Very positive report with clear endorsement of progress school making especially with behaviour and safety of

students

Main judgments were:

Action Plan – Fit for Purpose

School Improvement Plan – Fit for Purpose

Current Attendance = 95%

B. Targeted improvement: Has the trust kept its staffing structure under review and deployed staff efficiently to support an improved curriculum, or to target areas of the curriculum in need of development?

Warden House

1. Increased collaborative work across schools in the local cluster of primary schools has led to sharing of best practice and support for raising standards across the schools.
2. The SLT has been re-structured to ensure increase efficiency in the operational management of the school at a strategic level. This has led to improved results and a heightened degree of challenge from senior staff and governors.

Castle Community College

Increased collaborative work across schools in the local cluster of secondary schools has led to sharing of best practice and support for raising standards across the schools.

SchoolsCompany have put in place a wide range of professional development training for staff to make sure all teaching and learning continues to improve. Over the coming term, there will be support for school leaders to rigorously monitor performance to make sure expectations are challenging and that pupil attainment and progress continue to improve.

This initial support was mapped out in the Post Ofsted Action Plan detailing the support from the SchoolsCompany School Improvement Team extending to all areas identified in the Ofsted inspection report.

A number of new high quality external appointments and internal promotions have been made. The school, with the support of the Local Authority, has the capacity for the necessary improvement.

C. Focus on individual pupils: How has the trust managed the differing needs of pupils, such as those requiring one to one support, and those requiring more stretch?

Warden House

1. The school has significantly reduced the number of fixed term exclusions as a result of strong intervention strategies. As a result the one to one support has enabled the children to remain in school and progress in their learning.
2. Funds have been used to develop specialist support activities including 'Sensory Circuits' (occupational therapy groups held at the start of each day), 'Golden Club' (support for emotionally challenged students at lunch play) and 'Extra Lessons' supporting more able children.

Castle Community College

Twenty one new staff have been recruited to improve leadership at all levels and classroom teaching. The two sites have been reorganised so that all Key Stage 3 pupils are housed on the Mill Road site with Key Stage 4 and 5 students located at Salisbury Road. One building has been converted into the Phoenix Centre which provides additional support for a new behaviour management programme. Also, the installation of a robust site security system, enhanced measures for safeguarding students, clearer guidelines for teachers about assessment, marking and feedback and the implementation of a robust system of sanctions and rewards have been completed.

Senior leaders have acted similarly effectively to create better systems for monitoring both teaching and behaviour robustly and rigorously. As a result, behaviour in lessons and around the sites has improved and leaders report that the quality of teaching has also improved rapidly.

This has been further aided by the provision of extra support, like the 'Saturday school' which was attended by students during the examination season.

D. Collaboration: How has the trust engaged with other educational providers and experts to share delivery or good practice, and to drive up standards for the least cost?

Warden House

1. The school has led a collaborative training project for curriculum and leadership across the ten primary schools in the Deal Learning Alliance focusing on a value based curriculum. The impact of this has been shared widely with head teachers across Kent.
2. The school works closely with four local primary schools with a peer mentoring scheme where teachers visiting one another to develop practice; in addition each school hosts a monitoring visit day where heads review the quality of teaching and learning across the schools.
3. INSET days have been shared across schools, increasing the impact while reducing the cost of speakers and

venues leading to improved joint practice across the schools.

4. Educational consultants have been bought in to run training across the ten primary schools utilising additional funding bid for from the LA to raise standards across all schools in the Deal Learning Alliance; this has utilised funding from the LA to enable the project to run.

The school has a SLA with the East Kent Business Partnership providing training and support for school business enterprise activities.

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E. New initiatives

Use of savings to secure appointments and supply cover contracts short term contracts.

Quantifying improvements:

Castle Community College

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Financial governance and oversight:

As accounting officer I have responsibility for overseeing the effectiveness of the system of internal controls. As follows:-

- Our external auditors Williams Giles Accountants, report directly to the Audit Committee.
- Responsible Officer visits are completed during the financial year and reports are submitted to the LGB Finance Committees.

Any implications of their reviews relating to the financial internal controls will be reported and addressed to ensure continuous improvement of the systems in place.

The Academy Trust's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and system of delegation and accountability as follows:-

- Comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems of the Annual Budget and financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Finance Committees of the LGB.
- Major Capital works or expenditure programmes - Regular reviews by the LGB Finance Committees which indicate financial performance against the forecasts.

Better purchasing: All contracts are appraised or renegotiated in a timely manner to get the best mix of quality and effectiveness.

The Academy benchmarks itself against other comparative organisations using information supplied by the Education Funding Agency.

Options appraisal: The Board of Directors and Directorate apply the principles of best value when making decisions about:

- the allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the school.
- the targeting of resources to best improve standards and the quality of provision.
- the use of resources to best support the various educational needs of all pupils.

The trust has developed procedures for assessing need, and obtaining goods and services which provide "best value" in terms of suitability, efficiency, time, and cost.

Economies of scale: The Trust regularly takes opportunities to work collaboratively with others to reduce and share administration and procurement costs.

Better income generation: The Trust regularly review's ways to generate additional income.

Reviewing controls and managing risks:

The Trust has appoints Governors who act as responsible officer's. The RO's liaise closely with the Audit Committee who report to The Board of Trustees. Williams Giles Accountants are appointed as external auditors and have been also entrusted with aspects of internal audit as agreed with the Board of Trustees. Curriculum Budget holders receive regular budget reports monitored to ensure the most effective use of resources to meet the objectives.

Funds that are invested into high interest account to ensure maximum returns on surplus balances. This is reported to the LGB Finance Committee and discussed on a regular basis.

Insurance levels are reviewed annually and used cost-effectively to manage risks.

The Board of Directors review the reserve levels of the Academy annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves.

Lessons learned: The Trust is looking carefully at staffing costs, curriculum design and the admissions policy and the impact of these on outcomes for children and young people.

**Name:** Ms Jane Hadlow

**Academy Trust Accounting Officer**

**Date:** 18 Dec 2014