

Value for Money Statement

Organisation name: DIOCESE OF SALISBURY MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Company number: 8656655

Year ended 31 August 2014

I accept that as accounting officer of DIOCESE OF SALISBURY MULTI ACADEMY 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 results

The Trust has established an effective model of school improvement, which has supported significant improvements in performance across all of the Academies that have been in the Trust for the full year covered by this statement.

This model makes use of both internal and external school improvement expertise through the appointment of substantive Principals in the four Academies, supported by an Executive Principal. The Board of Directors bring a background and tracked record in educational improvement, and support has been provided to develop and strengthen the role of the Local Advisory Boards to provide clear accountability and challenge to the work of the staff in all Academies.

Focussed and targeted use of external School Improvement Advisors have maintained the continued drive for improvement across the Trust. Their time is used to challenge the progress against action plans, provide validation of evidence and chair meetings that hold all to account for the improvement journey of each Academy. Their reports provide additional evidence to the Local Advisory Board, and Board of Directors as to the impact on progress of actions being taken.

The Trust management has established mechanisms to enable school to school support to share best practice through a formal Academy Leader Forum, SENCO Forum and also support to Academy finance managers.

Chairs of each LAB also meet termly to provide support to each other, and strength the accountability link of the centrally employed executive staff to the Local Advisory Boards through this forum

The Trust continues to support Academies in also working with local cluster arrangements to ensure we continue to be an organisation that looks outwards and well as inwards.

Financial governance and oversight

A central finance team has been employed to ensure Trustees receive appropriate financial guidance and that all necessary external reporting requirements are fulfilled. Internal reporting procedures are being established with the Trust Board and committees

Since conversion cash flow has been appropriately managed to ensure sufficient balances are available for each Academy.

A clear financial scheme of delegated authority is in place and effectively managed and monitored.

Better purchasing

The Trust has in place appropriate and robust procurement processes, and includes within the central executive team significant expertise in procurement.

The Trust has negotiated MAT rates for service level agreements, reducing the expense to be met by each Academy.

The Trust has made use of the CPC purchasing consortium to maximise efficient procurement processes. Tendering was used to purchase a variety of services for the Trust including insurance, legal services, audit services and finance systems.

The Trust continues to purchase some services from local authorities where this provides the most value for money solution at the present time.

Maximising income generation

The Academies within the Trust continue to provide their facilities to the local community to raise income through lettings.

Reviewing controls and managing risks

The Trust Board of Directors holds and regularly reviews (minimum of once a quarter) a risk register that contains all significant risks to the Trust and the strategies for mitigating them.

Controls have been put in place to ensure the security of the Trust bank accounts. BACS payment facilities have been set up centrally for efficient processing.

The payroll for all Academies within the Trust has been combined and is controlled centrally, reducing processing costs.

Related Party Transactions

DSAT holds a register of Members and Directors interests. Since the formation of the Trust all related party transactions have been undertaken in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook. All fees paid have been at cost and compared to comparable services available in the market. The use of related parties will reduce in 2014/15 as DSAT builds its own internal capacity.

Lessons learned

The first nine months have been a time of significant change and settling in for the new organisation. The Trust will review all operations in the 14/15 academic year to ensure value for money and is continuing to refine its process for project managing new schools into the MAT to make the transition as smooth and efficient a process as possible.

It is also proposed to undertake full reviews of areas of significant expenditure, with ICT to be looked at in 2015.

Name: Mr Andrew Guest

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 22 Dec 2014