

Value for Money Statement

Academy trust name: Castle School Education Trust

Academy trust company number: 08397975

Year ended 31 August 2013

I accept that as accounting officer of **Castle School Education 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.

1 Improving educational results

- Our diverse curriculum ensures all students have the opportunity to raise their individual levels of achievement.
- We regularly review the staffing structure to ensure staff are efficiently deployed and are appropriately qualified and experienced specialists and enthusiasts.
- We bring in additional staff to target key curriculum areas, such as providing extra staffing in English and mathematics.
- We focus on the differing needs of every individual pupil. This is reflected in personalised learning programmes and outcomes for sub-cohorts.
- We have excellent tracking systems to record all aspects of student data including progress through school and to ensure that interventions and support are targeted to achieve Value for Money.
- The gap between the performance of non-FSM and FSM students narrowed between 2012 and 2013 (percentage of students attaining 5 or more A* to C GCSE including English and mathematics at KS4). Pupil Premium funding has been allocated to good effect, as illustrated by the detailed breakdown on the school website.
- Attainment at KS4 (percentage of students achieving 5 or more A* to C including English and mathematics) is significantly above the national average at 68%. Progress in English and mathematics at KS4 also remains above the national average. 82% of students made the expected progress in English and 74% of

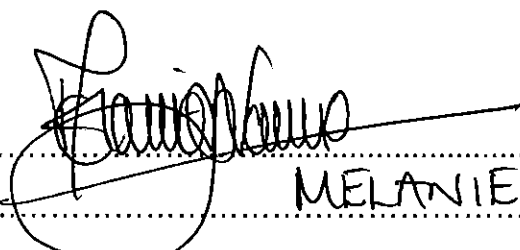
students made the expected progress in maths. 45% of students achieved the English Baccalaureate.

- A2 attainment remains significantly above the national average with average point score per student of 819 and average point score per entry at 213. The progress made by students at KS5 is positive and in line with the national average.

2 Financial Performance

- Financial governance and oversight is strong, with experienced professionals on the Finance and Resources sub-committee.
- Management accounts are prepared and issued regularly to enable monitoring to ensure Value for Money.
- Spending proposals are costed and presented to Senior Leaders/Governors and then challenged appropriately.
- The Estates Manager has been influential in driving down costs through better procurement and negotiation through 2012/13.
- All contracts are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are still fit for purpose and best value for our school. For example the photocopies/printing contract was re-negotiated in 2012 which both saved money and improved quality.
- Contracts have been taken in house where better Value for Money can be achieved, such as cleaning, behaviour support and property services.
- The academy Tendering policy ensures that tenders/quotes are obtained as appropriate to ensure Value for Money with all major projects as stated in our Financial Regulations.
- Cash flow forecasts are used to identify and invest surplus cash balances to maximise bank interest receivable.
- The academy has appointed a Responsible Officer from the Local Authority, who undertakes governance, systems and accounting checks and reports findings to the governors and academy auditors.
- The governing body regularly reviews the functions of the school, challenging how and why services are provided and setting targets and performance indicators for improvement.
- The governing body considers risks and their management by regular review of the risk register. It approves, on an annual basis, the Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation detailing the finance related systems and procedures and other key financial policies. There is full segregation of duties in the finance office.
- The academy explores opportunities to generate income via the hire of facilities and support to other schools and academies.

- The academy ensures a continual focus on best value for money and clearly understands the value of our assets and how they can be used effectively to increase all of our students' rates of progress.

Signed: 

Name: MELANIE WARNES

Academy Trust Accounting Officer

Date: 19th DECEMBER 2013