

Multi-Academy Trust uses SBS Budgets to calculate fees for students' diverse support requirements



Trust Profile

Name
The Delta Education Trust

School Category
Academy

School type
Alternative Provision (AP) and
Special Education Needs (SEN)

Pupil roll
155

Age range of pupils
5 to 16

LA
Poole and Hampshire

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Jennifer Clifford
Chief Finance Officer

The Delta Education Trust, consisting of The Quay School in Poole and Coppice Spring School in Hampshire, is a dedicated and experienced Alternative Provision and Special Education Needs provider.

Each school provides a flexible curriculum offer to enable students to succeed, make good choices and integrate in modern society.

The trust believes that all individuals have rights and responsibilities to themselves and to others. This is based on the belief that all individuals are of value and should be given the opportunity to learn and develop potential. Its overarching aim is to enable young people to develop their full potential to lead a purposeful life.

System setup

After being impressed by an SBS Budgets demonstration at NASBM 2014, Chief Finance Officer Jennifer Clifford was eager for the School Business Services team to visit the Delta Education Trust to discuss her complex budgeting requirements.

Previously, Jennifer would plan her budget using a number of spreadsheets, which was highly labour intensive. Since having SBS Budgets set up, the intuitive system has streamlined her monthly budget monitoring processes.

“I let go of my trusty spreadsheet once I was set up with SBS Budgets. Its user friendly interface and flexibility saves considerable time when adding staff contracts.”

Cashflow monitoring

SBS Budgets is an ideal cashflow monitoring solution for AP or SEN academies. The income calculator allows the Delta Education Trust to segment the number of payments made to the schools. It also offers student income forecasts for upcoming financial years and the ability to refer to specific annual intakes and provisions.

For expenditures, budget entry profiling makes formulating different risk models possible, such as the effect of inflation increases, which makes cashflow forecasting much simpler.

From here, the ability to drill-down to monthly expenditures makes it easier to plan ahead. Jennifer feels that for a multi-academy trust, SBS Budgets is the only way to manage the budgets for a number of schools.

“Headteachers need budget clarity to ensure that clear targets are set for levels of expenditure based on planned income and pupil number levels.” says Jennifer, who takes SBS Budgets into every board meeting, which gives her instant reports and saves preparation time.

“SBS Budgets allows me to forecast in finer detail and manage the break-even, as well as prepare for any points where there may be reductions in cash flow.”



Department	Start	End	Mat. leave start	Mat. leave end	Initial hours	Final hours	Weeks	Cost	Income
TEACH	1st Apr, 2014	31st Dec, 2015			1,000	1,000	M4 M5	3,674.92	3,674.92
TEACH	1st Apr, 2014	31st Dec, 2015			1,000	1,000	UP2 UP2	3,796.10	3,796.10
TEACH	1st Apr, 2014	31st Dec, 2015			1,000	1,000	M5 M5	3,240.10	3,240.10
TEACH	1st Apr, 2014	31st Dec, 2015			1,000	1,000	M4 M5	1,402.52	1,402.52

“I would recommend SBS Budgets to any trust countrywide.”

Jennifer Clifford
Chief Finance Officer

Analysis tags

Key to comparing the school’s provision as a whole, the Delta Education Trust utilises SBS Budgets’s unique analysis tags function to generate reports to track income against critical factors that are specific to AP and special schools. Managing the cost of staffing in these schools against the income levels provided is crucial and can easily be managed through the analysis tag function. Jennifer used the SBS Budgets budget reports for all her board meetings.

“I’ve found the analysis tags particularly useful, as they are an effective way of comparing income against a number of different expenditures.”

Salary monitor

To monitor and maintain actual and expected monthly expenditures, the salary monitor within SBS Budgets is a seamless tool. At trust level, monitoring payroll is a complex process due to the number of professionals required to deliver a flexible curriculum.

Jennifer has found that the salary monitor has saved considerable time, as SBS Budgets allows her to simply add a staff contract, and include any vacancy contracts within the budget. Previously she would have to cross-reference multiple spreadsheets, which adds precious time to a 12-month process.

“Monitoring salaries with a spreadsheet can take two staff members up to three days a month to complete. SBS Budgets has reduced the time on payroll checks to just an hour by only one staff member.”

Student contracts

Presenting an income forecast is not an easy task for special or alternative provision schools when the fees are specific to the individual student and are based on varying provisions. To accurately compare annual support costs and income, the consideration of each individual child per school year is vital.

In addition to the powerful analysis provided by SBS Budgets, Jennifer has recently upgraded to the student contracts module, which creates an accurate scenario for the diverse range of students that arrive at each school.

The module offers personalised and accurate monitoring of student income, accommodating the variants in SEN funding bands and IDACI scores. This allows Jennifer to set up specific fees and values for grading individual contracts. If the forecast predicts a deficit, then she has the flexibility to add default contracts to predict a targeted income level.

“The student contracts module allows us to accurately evaluate the standard fee required for students with varying needs, such as counselling, intervention and extra classes,” says Jennifer. “This SBS Budgets Student Module allows you to review past pupil number records and future predictions. This is a unique tool that directly links pupil funding to linked expenditure.”

Further development to SBS Budgets has reduced the time required to monitor student income to just two hours and have provided a lifeline for highlighting cashflow inaccuracies.

A key example of this cost and time saving was an instance when SBS Budgets provided a definitive reference to reconcile the income received for each pupil against the expected income forecasted in the budget planner. It highlighted an error where two pupils were not included in the statement and that there was a shortfall of funding that could be queried and rectified as soon as possible.

Specialist support

School Business Services believes in offering tailored support to each school. Jennifer has been particularly impressed with both the user-friendly budget planner and the ongoing support offered by the SBS Budgets team.

“Their help has been phenomenal”, Jennifer reflects. “The team research and understand the ongoing financial challenges we face as a special and AP trust and use SBS Budgets to provide a solution to facilitate our budgeting.”

SBS Budgets provides flexibility to manage complex budgeting models with numerous variables. Having the functionality in the budgeting module to predict scenarios and changeable forecasts assists Jennifer in managing any future financial risk, allowing the trust to make informed decisions to ensure financial success.

“In light of the upcoming funding restraints we will face over the next 5 years, I would recommend SBS Budgets to any trust countrywide and especially to any educational institutions who have to financially manage special and alternative provision.”

To find out more about SBS Budgets, contact the team on 0345 222 1551 • Option 5 or email hello@schoolbusinessservices.co.uk

schoolbusinessservices.co.uk