



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Schools financial value standard (SFVS)

Standard assessment form

March 2017

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Introduction

The schools financial value standard (SFVS) is a mandatory requirement for local authority maintained schools. The SFVS has been designed with schools to help them in managing their finances and to give assurance that they have secure financial management in place.

Governing bodies of maintained schools or management committees of pupil referral units (PRUs) have formal responsibility for the financial management of their schools, and so the standard is primarily aimed at governors or management committees. Other schools are welcome to use any of the material associated with the standard, if they would find it useful.

What do schools need to do?

The standard consists of 25 questions which governing bodies or management committees should formally discuss annually with the headteacher and senior staff.

The questions which form the standard are in sections A to D. Each question requires an answer of 'yes', 'in part, or 'no'.

- If the answer is 'yes', the comments column can be used to indicate the main evidence on which the governing body based its answer
- If the answer is 'no' or 'in part', the column should contain a very brief summary of the position and proposed remedial action

In Section E, governors or management committees should summarise remedial actions and the timetable for reporting back. Governors or management committees should ensure that each action has a specified deadline and an agreed owner. Governors or management committees must monitor the progress of these actions to ensure that all actions are cleared within specified deadlines.

The governing body or the management committee may delegate the consideration of the questions to a finance or other relevant committee, but a detailed report should be provided to the full governing body or the management committee and the chair of governors or the chair of the management committee must sign the completed form.

The school must send a copy of the signed standard to their local authority's finance department.

There is no prescription of the level of evidence that the governing body or management committee should require. The important thing is that governors and the management committee are confident about their responses.

The role of local authorities

Local authorities will use schools' SFVS returns to inform their programme of financial assessment and audit. The SFVS will not be externally assessed. Local authority and other auditors will have access to the standard, and when they conduct an audit can check whether the self-assessment is in line with their own judgement. Auditors should make the governing body, the management committee and the local authority aware of any major discrepancies in judgements. Auditors should also ensure that all actions have been addressed before a SFVS review takes place for another year.

Timetable

The Directed Revisions 2012 to the [Schemes for Financing Schools](#) make it a mandatory requirement for all local authority maintained schools to complete the SFVS assessment form on an annual basis and submit a signed copy (by the chair of governors or management committee) to their authority.

Support notes

[Support notes](#) are available for each question, which governing bodies can use if they wish. The notes provide clarification of the questions, examples of good practice and information on further support to assist schools in addressing specific issues.

The assessment form

School name: Meadow View Primary

LA and school DfE numbers: 372/2023

List of questions	Answer (yes/in part/no)	Comments, evidence and proposed actions
A: The governing body and school staff		
1. In the view of the governing body itself and of senior staff, does the governing body have adequate financial skills among its members to fulfil its role of challenge and support in the field of budget management and value for money?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The governing board includes some experienced governors who have attended finance training and/or had relevant experience through their work as well as less experienced/newly appointed governors. For succession planning, we do need at least one more governor to develop financial awareness initially by attending relevant training.. There are detailed governor minutes showing budget setting and budget monitoring has been discussed in line with the LA deadlines.• Governors attend relevant finance training and feedback to the governing board.

<p>2. Does the governing body have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governing body had a separate Finance, Premises and Personnel sub-committee until the start of the 2018/19 academic year. We reviewed the governance structure in September 2019 and no longer have sub-committees. All finance issues come to the full governing board meetings which are held monthly. • There is a focus on Finance at every second governing board meeting. These are chaired by either the Chair of Governors who is very experienced or the governor who was the Finance Committee Chair. • There are terms of reference for the governing board which are reviewed annually
<p>3. Is there a clear definition of the relative responsibilities of the governing body and the school staff in the financial field?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear job description for the Head, School Business Manager, Office Manager and Admin staff which stipulate clear responsibilities within finance roles. • There are terms of reference for the full governing body. These stipulates that a spend over £3000 must be approved by the finance committee. These are reviewed annually.

<p>4. Does the governing body receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least three times a year?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We follow RMBC Financial Regulations for Schools. This states that regular budget monitoring must be carried out. This is done 3 times per year and is taken to full governing board. • Detailed governor minutes are also available showing the ratification of the budget. The SBM attends regular finance meetings and supplies detailed reports to the governing
<p>5. Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governors and staff complete a Declaration of Business Interests annually this is monitored by the clerk of governors. This is a standing agenda item at all governor meetings
<p>6. Does the school have access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including when specialist finance staff are absent, e.g. on sick leave?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SBM has responsibility for the managing the budget on a day to day basis. • The Office manager has been trained to support the SBM with Financial procedures. • Schools Finance is also available to support if needed in the event of any absence by the SBM
<p>7. Does the school review its staffing structure regularly?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The full governing body commit-

		<p>tees review the staffing structure against the current budget at regular meetings. Governors receive a plan of the staffing year plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor minutes clearly show where the staffing structure has been reviewed discussed and agreed.
8. Have your pay decisions been reached in accordance with a pay policy reflecting clear performance criteria?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pay policy is reviewed and agreed by governors. • There is a separate Pay Committee which makes decisions on pay awards and conducts the Headteacher's performance appraisal. The governing body decides the HT pay award based on the pay committee recommendation.
9. Has the use of professional independent advice informed part of the pay decision process in relation to the headteacher?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school buy in professional independent advice from School Effectiveness Service
B: Setting the budget		
10. Is there a clear and demonstrable link between the school's budgeting and its plan for raising standards and attainment?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current budget is linked to the Development Excellence Plan (DEP), approval of which is recorded in the governing board

		<p>minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DEP IS regularly assessed against the budget
11. Does the school make a forward projection of budget, including both revenue and capital funds, for at least three years, using the best available information?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 3 year budget planner is available for all schools. • It should be recognised that in year adjustments are made, as more up to date information becomes available and are brought to governing board meetings for approval.
12. Does the school set a well-informed and balanced budget each year (with an agreed and timed plan for eliminating any deficit)?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school sets a balanced budget each year. The school currently does not have a deficit. • The governor minutes record this and show that this has been discussed and the reasons why any changes may have been made.
13. Is end year outturn in line with budget projections, or if not, is the governing body alerted to significant variations in a timely manner, and do they result from explicitly planned changes or from genuinely unforeseeable circumstances?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget for 2018/2019 has a proposed carry forward of £70k. At present the budget is not in a deficit. • The outcomes of the budget are discussed at the governing board meetings and are clearly shown with in the minutes of the meetings..

C: Value for money

<p>14. Does the school benchmark its income and expenditure annually against that of similar schools and investigate further where any category appears to be out of line?</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school compares benchmarking with other similar school on an annual basis usually around the time of setting the budget. This is completed by the Head Teacher and School Business Manager. Comparing staffing costs, Admin cost and building expenses. The SBM generates additional income for the school via various room lettings.• The Senior Leadership Team also generates income from being Associate Head Teaches/Teacher working for the LA.
<p>15. Does the school have procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money?</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school ensures it has value for money at all levels and are purchased within the financial regulations. The terms of reference has a value of £3000 that has to be discussed with the governing board. We always gain more than one quotation for goods/work to be completed. SBM regularly challenges best value with companies and negotiates on all contracts. The SBM works with a cluster of SBM for best value and having introduced collaborative buying

		<p>across the cluster. This has been used to access large orders on resource such as paper and services ie Data protection offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions regarding best value for money are recorded within the minutes of the subcommittee.
16. Are balances at a reasonable level and does the school have a clear plan for using the money it plans to hold in balances at the end of each year?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The past 3 financial years have been within the 2%-8% margin.
17. Does the school maintain its premises and other assets to an adequate standard to avoid future urgent need for replacement?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is a PFI school linked to Engie and Transform Rotherham. Through the PFI system the premises are maintained to a very high standard and during regular visits from Engie we maintain a score of 90%+ for premises due to the high standard of the environment.
18. Does the school consider collaboration with others, e.g. on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cluster currently receives free access to cluster PE tournaments organised by Winterhill School. • The SBM also works on joint purchasing with the cluster of schools that attend the SBM network meeting. • SBM is also attends the Cluster SBM network meeting and the

		<p>South Yorkshire Business Managers Network meetings. Which also helps to achieve best value.</p>
<p>19. Can the school give examples of where it has improved the use of resources during the past year?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a school we are constantly reviewing the contracts and cost of resources. The collaborative buying as a cluster has reduced the cost of resources such as paper. A service we have worked on together this year was a Data protection Officer who supports all schools. • Also the largest resource in school is the staff. We have worked well to deploy staff strategically across school. This has then enabled key staff to provide training out of school which has then generated a healthy income for the school. • We are also a bank account school this has reduced the cost of resources due to having a school purchasing card which allows us to shop for best value products. We review staffing needs at the start of the financial school year and amend these as needed. These

		are report to governors on a regular basis via meetings and are recorded in the minutes.
D: Protecting public money		
20. Is the governing body sure that there are no outstanding matters from audit reports or from previous consideration of weaknesses by the governing body?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Internal Audit report includes an agreed action plan with timescales and significance ratings for each issue raised if needed. This would then be taken to Governors and minuted that it has been ratified. • The School fund is audited separately and is taken to Governors meeting to be ratified. • SBM receives visits from Schools Finance each half term.
21. Are there adequate arrangements in place to guard against fraud and theft by staff, contractors and suppliers (please note any instance of fraud or theft detected in the last 12 months)?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school adheres to the Schools Financial Procedures and Regulations. Job descriptions for staff with financial responsibilities ensure segregation of duties. • The school has been a cashless school for 3 years. This ensures transparency of monies taken for audit purposes. No cash is handled on site unless a school activity such as a fair or disco which is

		currently paid in to school fund.
22. Are all staff aware of the school's whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have adopted the Local Authorities confidential reporting code (aka whistleblowing policy) which has been agreed by governors <p>All staff are aware of this document</p>
23. Does the school have an accounting system that is adequate and properly run and delivers accurate reports, including the annual Consistent Financial Reporting return?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a school we use the FMS accounting system which provides accurate reports. The schools income and expenditure data is also held in the LA's financial database CedAr. The school a bank account school and reconciles bank statements and financial records regularly. This is monitored by Schools finance.
24. Does the school have adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an independent audit of the school fund account. A signed copy of the Auditor's Certificate is approved by the Governing Body, and submitted to the LA every year and is passed through governors

25. Does the school have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up-to-date asset register and adequate insurance?	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CYPS Emergency Planning Guidance/Plan for Schools is in place.• We have an inventory and this is reviewed annually but this does not need to be checked. The school is fully insured through the LA
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Outcome of self-assessment

E: Summary of agreed remedial action and timetable for reporting back

At least one governor to build up financial awareness and to attend the relevant training by December 2019.

Signature: _____ Chair of Governors / Management Committee

Print full name of signatory: _____

Print date SFVS agreed by full governing body/management committee: _____

Date SFVS submitted to LA for review:_____



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