



Education  
Funding  
Agency

# **Schools financial value standard (SFVS)**

**Standard assessment form**

**Wyton on the Hill**

**March 2015**

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## Introduction

The schools financial value standard (SFVS) is a mandatory requirement for local authority (LA) 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 managing 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 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 LA'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

LAs will use schools' SFVS returns to inform their programme of financial assessment and audit. The SFVS will not be externally assessed. LA 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 LA 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](#) makes 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:

LA and school DfE numbers:

List of questions	Answer (yes/in part/no)	Comments, evidence and proposed actions
<b>A: The governing body and school staff</b>		
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	Resources & Personnel Committee members have financial/accounting qualifications including ACMA and CPFA
2. Does the governing body have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference (TORs) and a knowledgeable and experienced chair?	Yes	Resources & Personnel covers Finance. Chair in post for 4 yrs and his job with AWS ltd includes up to £1m budgetry control. Committee TORs are clear and reviewed each September
3. Is there a clear definition of the relative responsibilities of the governing body and the school staff in the financial field?	Yes	Resources & Personnel TORs. Code of Practise for the Governing Body. Standing Orders for the Governing Body
4. Does the governing body receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least three times a year?	Yes	Seen in R & P Agenda and Minutes - where BCR is reviewed. Full Governing body (FGB) minutes – Head Teacher report

5. Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?	Yes in Part	Standard Agenda item on R & P minutes. Pecuniary Interests flagged annually and recorded by School Sec.
6. Does the school have access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including when specialist finance staff are absent, eg on sick leave?	Yes	Head has access to Financial advice from the LA. Internal Financial procedures document. J Tuxworth is Financial Secretary received trg on Agora etc.
7. Does the school review its staffing structure regularly?	Yes	R & P Minutes record this. HT report to Governing Body
8. Have your pay decisions been reached in accordance with a pay policy reflecting clear performance criteria?	Yes	R & P and FGB Minutes. Annual by HT. Ofsted Perf related pay doc (Anomalised) seen by FGB
9. Has the use of professional independent advice informed part of the pay decision process in relation to the headteacher?	Yes	Staff Appraisal Committee (includes HT) pay award based on Professional independent advice from Pauline Ball's report from LA
<b>B: Setting the budget</b>		
10. Is there a clear and demonstrable link between the school's budgeting and its plan for raising standards and attainment?	Yes	School's Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) in Staff training and Development – see funding
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	R & P Minutes show review of LA Budget planner with 3 yrs strategic plan. HT works closely with Ray Byford from LA

12. Does the school set a well-informed and balanced budget each year (with an agreed and timed plan for eliminating any deficit)?	Yes	R & P minutes and TORs recommend budget to FGB for approval and signoff
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	HT Report commentaries. R & P minutes for 16 March 16
<b>C: Value for money</b>		
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?	Yes	Access to Ray Byford from LA who knows similar schools for benchmarking
15. Does the school have procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money?	Yes	School Secretary complies with procedures – use of LA approved suppliers such as ESPO
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	R & P Minutes. BCR. HT Reports etc are safe guards against overspends
17. Does the school maintain its premises and other assets to an adequate standard to avoid future urgent need for replacement?	Yes in Part	Balance struck between maintenance and capital investment in a poor fabric building. Not cost effective to just keep repairing over 'cracks'
18. Does the school consider collaboration with others, eg on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?	Yes	HT meets with other HT in local area. (Network/Cluster) Share best practise and training. Have shared financial secretary in past.
19. Can the school give examples of where it has improved the use of resources during the past year?	Yes	HT reports- contract reviews. Appropriate use of TA resource. Introduced small hot

		water boilers to get around failing larger system. Art subject – Trained Artist resource, developed & introduced rotation
<b>D: Protecting public money</b>		
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	R & P and FGB minutes. HT report. H & S audit deemed ok by LA , Safeguarding audit coming up.
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	Internal Financial procedure doc. Arrangements around Financial Secretary minuted in R & P. SIMS net. Separation of duties
22. Are all staff aware of the school's whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns?	Yes	Policy in place and communicated. Part of NQT Induction
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	See BCRs
24. Does the school have adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds?	Yes in Part	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Friends of Wyton Newsletter shows what has been raised</li> <li>2. School trips covered in BCR</li> </ol>
25. Does the school have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up-to-date asset register and adequate insurance?	Yes	Critical Incident Plan up to date. Asset register held and Insurance.

## Outcome of self-assessment

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

5. Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?	Yes in Part	Standard Agenda item on R & P minutes. Pecuniary Interests flagged annually and recorded by School Sec. <b>Governors may also need to declare an interest against particular agenda items</b>
24. Does the school have adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds?	Yes in Part	1. Friends of Wyton Newsletter shows what has been raised 2. School trips covered in BCR <b>Need to increase governance around audit of funds</b>

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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