

### **Introduction to the schools financial value standard (SFVS) checklist**

The schools financial value standard (SFVS) helps to provide schools with assurance that they are meeting the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management.

The SFVS checklist asks a number of questions of governing bodies in six areas of resource management to provide assurance that the school is managing its resources effectively. This can be used to identify possible areas for change to ensure that resources are being used to support high-quality teaching and the best education outcomes for pupils.

The checklist was formerly part of a tool that also contained a dashboard. This is now available on the schools financial benchmarking website. It shows how a school's data compares to thresholds on a range of statistics that have been identified as indicators for good resource management and outcomes, which will help you to complete your checklist.

### **Outcome of schools financial value standard (SFVS)**

#### **Summary of agreed action and timetable for reporting back:**

Signature: (Chair of governing body & management committee)	<i>Pauline Lucarz</i>
Full name of signatory:	<b>Pauline Lucarz</b>
Date SFVS agreed by full management committee:	<b>28.03.2023</b>
Date SFVS submitted to local authority for review:	<b>31.03.2023</b>

## Schools financial value standard (SFVS) checklist

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<b>School name:</b>	<b>Whittlefield Primary and Nursery School</b>
<b>School LAEstab number:</b>	<b>12037</b>

Answer

Comments, evidence and proposed actions

### A. Governance

1	In the view of the governing body and senior staff, does the governing body have adequate and up-to-date financial skills among its members to fulfil its role of challenge and support in the field of budget management and value for money? Is there a plan in place to address any gaps?	<a href="#">Q1 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of Governors have several years' experience in schools finance.</li> <li>• Finance training is available for Governors from the Local Authority.</li> <li>• Members of the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team to complete a Skills Matrix and attend training if required.</li> <li>• Governors are encouraged to ask questions of the Head Teacher in all Governing Body meetings about all issues including finance.</li> </ul>
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2	Does the governing body have a finance committee, or equivalent, with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair?	<a href="#">Q2 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of Reference are agreed on an annual basis at the first meeting of the Governing Board in each academic year.</li> <li>• The Terms of Reference are based on guidance provided by the Local Authority.</li> <li>• The Governing Body expects to have experience and knowledge across the full Governing Board.</li> </ul>
3	Does the governing body receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least 6 times a year?	<a href="#">Q3 guidance</a>	In part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body receives a termly Financial Monitoring Reports prepared by the Local Authority</li> <li>• At the termly meetings the Head Teacher/SBM provides updated budget information which highlights: Areas of significant overspend, Areas of significant underspend; and advises Governors of the reasons for the significant variances.</li> <li>• The Head Teacher/SBM advises the Governors of what the likely end of year balance will be if expenditure continues as anticipated. This information provides Governors with the opportunity to amend the budget if required and either allocate additional money where required if there is likely to be an over spend or allocate money for items not agreed in the original budget i.e. additional staffing/ resources.</li> <li>• From April 2023, the Governing Body will receive at least 6 school budget monitoring reports.</li> </ul>
4	Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?	<a href="#">Q4 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the first Governing Body meeting at the start of each academic year, Governors are required to complete a Register of Business Interest form.</li> <li>• At every Governing Body/Committee meeting "Declaration of Interest" is an</li> </ul>

					<p>agenda item where Governors can either; Declare an interest in any item on the agenda, or; Provide Governors with the opportunity to up-date information on their Register of Business Interest form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff with financial responsibilities in school also complete a Register of Business Interest form.</li> </ul>
5	Does the school have access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including when specialist finance staff are absent, for example, on sick leave?	<a href="#">Q5 guidance</a>		<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff carrying out financial duties in school have appropriate training provided by the Local Authority.</li> <li>• Additional training is available from the Local Authority.</li> <li>• The Local Authority can be contacted to provide additional support if there is a lengthy staff absence due to sickness.</li> <li>• Cover can be provided on a short-term basis in school if a member of staff is absent for a short period of time.</li> <li>• Buying any level of our support packages from the Schools Finance Service will assist in giving access to an adequate level of financial expertise. The higher the support package the greater the level of assurance</li> <li>• Staff with financial responsibilities are asked to complete a Skills Matrix to ensure that financial skills are used to the best advantage in school.</li> </ul>

## B. School Strategy

6	Does the school have a realistic, sustainable and flexible financial strategy in place for at least 3 years, based on realistic assumptions about future funding, pupil numbers and pressures?	<a href="#">Q6 guidance</a>		<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local Authority prepare a Governors Enhanced Monitoring Report with a Three-Year Financial Forecast in conjunction with the Headteacher and SBM.</li> </ul>
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7	Is the financial strategy integrated with the school's strategy for raising standards and attainment, through integrated curriculum and financial planning?	<a href="#">Q7 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money is clearly identified in the school budget for School Improvement.</li> <li>• Costs for each section of the School Improvement Plan are clearly identified. Regular reports on progress towards each priority in the School Improvement Plan are submitted to the Governing Body.</li> <li>• Governors are informed of how Pupil Premium money will be spent and this information has been made available on the school's website. The Governing Body is also informed of the impact of the funding.</li> </ul>
8	Does the school have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up-to-date asset register and adequate insurance?	<a href="#">Q8 guidance</a>	In part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has an Emergency Response Plan in place which is updated by the Local Authority and adopted by the Governing Body. This is currently under review by the Headteacher and SBM.</li> <li>• The school has implemented an Asset Register and continue to update and monitor as necessary.</li> <li>• The Local Authority is responsible for the school's insurance arrangement.</li> <li>• Daily "backing up" of IT information is stored offsite</li> </ul>

### C. Setting the annual budget

9	Does the school set a well-informed and balanced 3-year budget and has this been submitted to the local authority?	<a href="#">Q9 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed budget is considered early in the summer term by Governors and agreed once considered.</li> <li>• The Headteacher/SBM provides a detailed report on budget allocations and specifically identifies any significant changes to allocations compared with the budget for</li> </ul>
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				<p>the previous financial year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The budget information clearly shows estimated income and expenditure.</li> <li>• The budget information clearly shows the likely carry forward at the end of the financial year and any in-year surplus/deficit.</li> <li>• Pupil Premium funding is clearly identified as a budget allocation.</li> <li>• Funding for School Improvement is clearly identified in the budget.</li> <li>• The Governors consider the budget in detail together with any possible amendments to the budget and the financial implications of the amendments.</li> <li>• If there was the possibility that there would be a deficit budget this matter would be discussed with Officers from the Local Authority when a Recovery Plan would be prepared.</li> <li>• At the termly meeting of the Governors, they discuss whether any money should be reallocated to different budget headings or whether money needs to be saved under any budget headings or if additional expenditure can be made.</li> </ul>
10	Does the budget setting process allow sufficient time for the governing body to scrutinise and challenge the information provided?	<a href="#">Q10 guidance</a>	<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body receive the school budget in sufficient time to enable challenge and scrutiny.</li> </ul>
11	Is the school realistic in its pupil number projections and can it move quickly to recast the budget if the projections and the reality are materially different?	<a href="#">Q11 guidance</a>	<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body receive projection from the school and adapts to increasing or falling pupil numbers where possible.</li> </ul>
12	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	<a href="#">Q12 guidance</a>	<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body receive the school's Outturn Statement at the end of each financial year.</li> </ul>

	changes or from genuinely unforeseeable circumstances?				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body monitor expenditure on a termly basis so they are always aware of what the likely outturn figure should be. If the outturn figure is significantly different than the projected amount the Headteacher/SBM are asked to provide an explanation for the difference between the actual amount and the projected amount. This gives the Governing Body the option of amending the budget to either allocate more funds or reduce expenditure.</li> </ul>
13	Are balances at a reasonable level and does the school have a clear plan for using the money it plans to hold in balance at the end of each year?	<a href="#">Q13 guidance</a>		<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body are advised on a termly basis what the school balances are at present and what they are likely to be at the end of the financial year.</li> <li>• The Governing Body ensure that there will be enough funding available to support the budget in the following financial year.</li> <li>• Any additional spending is clearly costed and used to allocate resources where they are most required.</li> <li>• The school follows the Local Authority's Guidance on appropriate levels of Reserves.</li> <li>• If the projected balance of the budget at the end of each financial year is too high or too low, the Governing Body view the budget allocations to ensure that money is reallocated appropriately.</li> </ul>

## D. Staffing

14	Does the school review its staffing structure regularly to ensure it is the best structure to meet the needs of the	<a href="#">Q14 guidance</a>		<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The staffing structure and management structure in school are under constant review to reflect the school's needs.</li> </ul>
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	school whilst maintaining financial integrity?				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The staffing and management structure for an academic year are clearly agreed as part of the budget setting process.</li> <li>• Any proposed changes to the Staffing Structure and subsequent costs of the changes are considered by the Governing Body.</li> <li>• Any changes to the staffing structure are subject to the appropriate consultation process.</li> <li>• The Head Teacher regularly provides information regarding the school staffing structure in their termly Head Teacher's Report to Governing Body meetings.</li> </ul>
15	Has the use of professional independent advice informed part of the pay decision process in relation to the head teacher and is it tightly correlated to strong educational outcomes and sound financial management?	<a href="#">Q15 guidance</a>		<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body appoints a Committee of Appointed Governors on an annual basis.</li> <li>• The Committee of Appointed Governors meet with the School's Adviser on an annual basis to review the Head Teacher's performance for the previous year and set targets for the current year.</li> <li>• The Committee of Appointed Governors make a pay recommendation for the Head Teacher to the Pay Committee on an annual basis.</li> </ul>
16	Has the school published on its website the number of employees (if any) whose gross salary exceeded £100k?	<a href="#">Q16 guidance</a>		<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has published on its website the number of employees (if any) whose gross salary exceeded £100k. This can be found in the Financial Information section.</li> </ul>
17	Does the school benchmark the size of its senior leadership team annually against that of similar schools?	<a href="#">Q17 guidance</a>		<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member of the Governing Body and the SBM consider benchmarking information with similar schools and report their findings</li> </ul>

## E. Value for money

18	Does the school benchmark its income and expenditure and investigate further where any category appears to be out of line?	<a href="#">Q18 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SBM provides benchmarking information on income and expenditure for the Governing Body to consider and investigate if necessary.</li> </ul>
19	Has the school leadership team considered the results of the self-assessment dashboard or other DfE benchmarking tools?	<a href="#">Q19 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SBM shares the benchmarking information with the SLT for consideration</li> </ul>
20	Does the school have procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money?	<a href="#">Q20 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body follows procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money prepared by the Local Authority.</li> <li>• Financial Policies and procedures are approved on an annual basis by the Governing Body.</li> <li>• The Local Authority's tendering process is used to obtain value for money.</li> <li>• The school obtains quotes for goods and services as required in the Internal Financial Regulations.</li> <li>• The Local Authority provides an audit service to ensure that the school is following it's adopted procedures</li> </ul>
21	Is the governing body given the opportunity to challenge the school's plans for replacing contracts for goods and services that are due to expire shortly?	<a href="#">Q21 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body follows procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money prepared by the Local Authority.</li> <li>• Financial Policies and procedures are approved on an annual basis by the Governing Body.</li> <li>• The Local Authority's tendering process is used to obtain value for money.</li> <li>• The school obtains quotes for goods and services as required in the Internal Financial Regulations.</li> <li>• The Local Authority provides an audit</li> </ul>

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22	Does the school consider collaboration with others, for example, on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?	<a href="#">Q22 guidance</a>		<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SBM regularly collaborates with staff at other schools through the SWAT SAS (School Administration Specialists) to ensure best practice and value for money wherever possible. This was paused during the COVID pandemic but will be reinstated from September 2023.</li> <li>• The Local Authority tenders for a number of goods and services for all schools eg; fuel, to obtain the best prices available.</li> <li>• The Governing Body always consider whether there were any areas in which collaboration with other schools might be valuable in obtaining better value for money</li> </ul>
23	Do you compare your non-staff expenditure against the DfE recommended national approved frameworks to ensure you are achieving best value?	<a href="#">Q23 guidance</a>		<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SBM ensures we are constantly on the lookout to improve the use of resources by reviewing contracts, reviewing the way work is done and reviewing the use of premises in line with the DfE approved framework.</li> </ul>
24	Does the school maintain its premises and other assets to an adequate standard and make best use of capital monies for this purpose?	<a href="#">Q24 guidance</a>		<b>In part</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school purchases services from the Local Authority's PROP Team who prepare an Asset Management Plan for the school.</li> <li>• The Asset Management Plan is considered by the Governing Body and resources are allocated as appropriate.</li> <li>• The Governing Body are regularly advised of how much PROP/DFC/Delegated Maintenance funding is available.</li> <li>• An allocation in the school budget for Building/Maintenance is clearly identified.</li> <li>• The school maintains a stock register.</li> <li>• The Governing Body confirms that the Annual Statement of Compliance is</li> </ul>

					completed by the Head Teacher/SBM – however this has not been requested by the Health and Safety compliance team since 2019-2020.
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## F. Protecting public money

25	Is the governing body sure that there are no outstanding matters from audit reports or from previous consideration of weaknesses by the governing body?	<a href="#">Q25 guidance</a>	<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report from the last financial audit carried out by the Local Authority had been submitted to the Resources Committee.</li> <li>• All the recommendations from the previous audit visit had been implemented.</li> <li>• The school last had a financial audit carried out by the Local Authority in February 2005.</li> </ul>
26	Are there adequate arrangements in place to manage related party transactions and has a complete list of related party transactions been appended to the checklist document (see template for recording related party transactions)?	<a href="#">Q26 guidance</a>	<b>Yes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body and members of staff with financial responsibility are required annually to complete a Business Register of Interest. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that open and transparent procurement procedures are followed, and any potential conflicts of interest are declared and then adequately and appropriately managed. They will be recorded on related party transaction template supplied.</li> </ul>

27	Are there adequate arrangements in place to guard against fraud and theft by staff, contractors and suppliers?	<a href="#">Q27 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school implements policies and procedures prepared and proposed by the Local Authority.</li> <li>• An up to date stock list is kept in school.</li> <li>• The Unofficial School Fund is externally audited on an annual basis and submitted to the Governing Body.</li> <li>• There is a clear division of duties between purchasing and payment.</li> <li>• Advice and guidance is sought from the Local Authority when required.</li> <li>• The school is subject to an internal audit by the Local Authority at any time.</li> <li>• The Head Teacher can request an audit if she has any concerns about the carrying out of Policies and Procedures in school.</li> </ul>
28	Are all staff aware of the school's whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns?	<a href="#">Q28 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body approved a Whistleblowing Policy which is adopted from the Lancashire model every Autumn Term.</li> <li>• All staff have been made aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and how to access it.</li> </ul>
29	Does the school have an accounting system that is adequate and properly run and delivers accurate reports, including the consistent financial reporting return?	<a href="#">Q29 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school uses the SIMS financial package for their accounting system which is a nationally recognised and accepted software package.</li> </ul>
30	Does the school have adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds?	<a href="#">Q30 guidance</a>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governing Body receives Unofficial School Fund accounts on an annual basis which have been externally audited.</li> <li>• The Governing Body appoints an external auditor on an annual basis.</li> <li>• A copy of the audited accounts is sent to the Local Authority.</li> <li>• The Governing Body considers the audited funds and questions areas of expenditure if required.</li> </ul>