

Schools financial value standard

The checklist asks a number of questions of governing bodies in six areas of resource management to help provide assurance that resources are being managed effectively.

The completion of this assessment forms part of the schools financial value standard. Your return must be submitted to your local authority.

Guidance on completion of this document can be found [here](#). This guidance also includes examples of good practice and details further support available to assist governing bodies in addressing specific issues. Clicking on the individual questions below will also take you to the relevant section of the guidance.

Schools should answer each question with 'yes', 'no', or 'in part' from the drop down lists provided. They should provide comments, evidence and proposed actions for questions as appropriate.

School name:	Wirral Hospitals' School
School LA/Estab number:	344 7019

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 financial skills among its members to fulfil its role of challenge and support in the field of budget management and value for money?	Q1 guidance	Yes Governor skills analysis updated regularly. Ensures best value - Challenges and reviews procedures & best value; regular staffing reviews; Benchmarking; excellent Audit & FMSIS Reports; School Business Manager (SBM) training and member of the Birkenhead North & South SBM Cluster, NAHE SBM Cluster and NNoSS (National Network of Special Schools) . Finance Assistant to provide support & receive training ; SBM and FA both attends LMS meetings and any other meetings that provide updates relevant to the SBM role.
2	Does the governing body have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair?	Q2 guidance	Yes Terms of Reference reviewed annually (last reviewed 07.10.2020) Financial Policies and Procedures reviewed annually; Full Governor meetings 6 times per year; Finance is an agenda item at each meeting and SBM attends. NEED TO WRITE SOMETHING ABOUT MB
3	Does the governing body board receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least six times a year?	Q3 guidance	Yes Full Governor meetings 6 times per year as of September 2019 ; budget setting report - April/May; Period 6 report - Oct/Nov; Period 9 report - Jan/Feb; Year end report - April/May; tabulation reports available monthly; Headteacher & SBM report any queries; SBM reports any concerns to Chair of Governors

4	Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?	Q4 guidance
5	Does the school have access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including when specialist finance staff are absent, e.g. on sick leave?	Q5 guidance

Yes
Yes

Declaration of Interest forms completed annually (and each time there are new appointments); Declaration Forms are seen, checked, signed and commented on by Headteacher and Chair of Governors; Declaration of Interest register is checked and signed twice a year and feedback given at the following Governor meeting (last checked and signed 13.03.2020); Declaration of Interest forms to be completed via SelfServe from Sept 2020.
Business Manager and Finance Assistant both employed full-time; Business Continuity Plan (updated and agreed 07.10.2020); Financial Policies and Procedures updated regularly (updated and agreed 07.10.2020); Premium Level SLA from LMS purchased. ongoing in-house training and up-skilling for the Finance Assistant to provide support.

B. School strategy

6	Does the school have a realistic, sustainable and flexible financial strategy in place for at least the next 3 years, based on realistic assumptions about future funding, pupil numbers and pressures?	Q6 guidance
7	Is the financial strategy integrated with the school's strategy for raising standards and attainment?	Q7 guidance
8	Does the school have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up-to-date asset register and adequate insurance?	Q8 guidance

Yes
Yes
Yes

Annual Budget setting based on SIP; review of budget at Period 6 & Period 9; 1 year and 3 years projections presented to Governors; Budget - complex as not based on pupil numbers; Departmental Budgets to be set & reviewed regularly; additional income via AWPU varies in accordance with admissions throughout the year which cannot be accurately predicted; accurate information regarding FSM and Ever 6 difficult to obtain - funding predictions complex.
School Development Plan - Working Document - Screenshots to Governors to show change; Governors challenge quality of teaching & Learning; budgeting and recruiting quality of teaching & learning; SLT training re: AFL and Classroom Observation; All performance management targets are linked to SIDP and link back directly to the budget; reporting on the appropriate use of PP and Ever 6.
Business Continuity Plan updated & agreed annually (updated and agreed on 07.10.2020); Asset Register updated annually; offsite register signed annually by the Chair of Governors.

C. Setting the annual budget

9	Does the school set a well-informed and balanced budget each year (with an agreed and timed plan for eliminating any deficit)?	Q9 guidance
10	Does the budget setting process allow sufficient time for the governing body to scrutinise and challenge the information provided?	Q10 guidance
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?	Q11 guidance
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 such variations result from explicitly planned changes or from genuinely unforeseeable circumstances?	Q12 guidance
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?	Q13 guidance

Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes

Budget set by Headteacher, SBM and Bursar before taking to Governors to be agreed (budget on agenda for Governor meeting on 12.05.2021); Balanced budget setting - ensuring that the budget is in line with the School Improvement Plan; Budget is set with an assessment made on income that will be received throughout the year (due to nature of admissions AWPU, Pupil Premium, CLA, FSM, Ever 6, Exceptional Needs funding cannot be accurately predicted); budget is unique and different to other schools; great care is taken at Budget Setting due to the unpredictability of additional income and this is carefully monitored throughout the year; budget is complex as not based on pupil numbers; students requiring 1:1 TA support unpredictable.
Period 6 & 9 Reports showing 3 year projections - discussed at Governors to highlight any significant impact to the budget for the following year; finance is on the agenda at every Governors meeting so updates are given regularly; budget taken to Governors to be agreed before the deadline (budget setting agenda item for 12.05.2021).
Realistic pupil numbers cannot be projected as the students are dual registered with JPC and their mainstream school until they either return to their main school or once they are in Year 11, they will be single registered with JPC
Budgeting is complex as not based on pupil numbers; additional income streams vary in accordance with admissions throughout the year which cannot be accurately predicted; students requiring 1:1 TA support unpredictable - Temporary staff where needed; all information available used for forecasts but 3 year projections are unpredictable; unforeseen staff sickness issues are risk managed; unforeseen building repairs, alterations etc are risk managed; monthly finance reports monitoring expenditure & income; monthly tabs provided by LMS
Unallocated funds invested by LA at Budget Setting; Credit balance needed to set balanced budget next year due to unique budget and uncertain income; Period reports and projections show estimated balances and these are reviewed at Period 6 & 9 (P6 & 9 discussed at Governors on 25.11.2020 & 03.02.2021); School Development Plan sets out future developments and plans for spending any large c/f; Additional income varies in accordance with admissions throughout the year which cannot be accurately predicted.

D. Staffing

14	Does the school review and challenge its staffing structure regularly to ensure it is the best structure to meet the needs of the school whilst maintaining financial integrity?	Q14 guidance
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?	Q15 guidance
16	Does the school benchmark the size of its senior leadership team annually against that of similar schools?	Q16 guidance

Yes
Yes
Yes

Major staffing re-structure carried out in Autumn 2017, including New Headteacher, Deputy Head and Assistant Head (re-structure agreed on); Admin Team re-structure due to retirement of SBM and resignation of Finance Manager - New SBM appointed full-time, previous Admin Assistant (Band C) now full-time Finance Assistant/Admin Assistant (Band D) to assist the SBM; resignation of Admin/Finance Assistant - now part-time Admin Assistant, full-time SBM supported by LMS Bursar; School Improvement Plan - reviewed regularly to ensure all points are met within deadlines (ensuring strategic development, delivery of curriculum and needs of pupils are being met by current staffing structure - reviewed and adapted when necessary); Budget Setting determines affordability; Performance Management & Appraisal reviews; regular staffing reviews
New Headteacher September 2017 - Salary set in accordance with the schools ISR; An external, Independent SIP considers the performance and the appraisal of the Headteacher; recommendation from the SIP made to Governors (HT Appraisal 23.11.2020)
Section D of the SFVS Dashboard - report to be discussed at the following Governor meeting once available; no other school similar to benchmark against

E. Value for money

17	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?	Q17 guidance	Yes	WHS is a unique school so benchmarking is difficult as no 'like for like' schools; Benchmarking Report Card 2019-2020 taken to Governors and discussed on 03.02.2021 ; enhanced collaborations with NAHE should improve work in this area; SFVS Dashboard completed
18	Does the school have procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money?	Q18 guidance	Yes	In accordance for the Scheme for Financing Schools and our own Financial Policies & Procedures (Purchasing and Procurement Policies); contracts and SLAs reviewed annually; advice and recommendations from other schools in the SBM Cluster; Amazon account for best value online purchases; chargecard for competitive/best value online purchasing; LA Facilities Management SLA to provide quotes for Capital and other schools works required; in-house and LA training where possible as cheaper.
19	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?	Q19 guidance	Yes	All SLAs reviewed annually at Governor meetings (last review meeting 03.02.2021); 3 quotes provided for expensive SLAs; SBM provides recommendations based on information received from either previous involvement, references or advice from other schools/colleagues; all SLAs are agreed by Governors ; all SLAs and costings for the last 3 years kept on file and a copy given to Governors before renewal (copy given at meeting on 05.02.2020).
20	Does the School consider collaboration with others, e.g. on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?	Q20 guidance	Yes	Headteacher active member of WASH, WISPA and NAHE; SBM member of NAHE SBM Cluster, North & South Birkenhead SBM Cluster and NNoSS - discounts for cluster schools signing up to new SLAs; advice sharing with local schools & colleagues; In-house and LA training where possible.
21	Do you compare your non-staff expenditure against the DfE recommended national deals to ensure you are achieving best value?	Q21 guidance	Yes	LA Procures utilities on schools behalf via Crown Commercial Service
22	Does the school maintain its premises and other assets to an adequate standard and make best use of capital monies for this purpose?	Q22 guidance	Yes	SLA with Facilities Management, regular visits from Building Inspector & full-time Site Manager to identify future maintenance, repairs and renewals; regular premises report to SLT & Governors; Annual audit/inventory of equipment; regular PAT testing of equipment by Site Manager and log kept ; LA date support - review and upgrade of IT equipment; budget allocated for repairs & maintenance; formula capital funding for major building work; School Improvement Plan for long term plans.

F. Protecting public money

23	Is the governing body sure that there are no outstanding matters from audit reports, internal audit reports or from previous consideration of weaknesses by the governing body?	Q23 guidance
24	Are there adequate arrangements in place to manage conflicts of interest or any related party transactions?	Q24 guidance
25	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)	Q25 guidance
26	Are all staff aware of the school's whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns?	Q26 guidance
27	Does the school have an accounting system that is adequate and properly run and delivers accurate reports, including the annual Consistent Financial Reporting return?	Q27 guidance
28	Does the school have adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds?	Q28 guidance

Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes

Audit Report July 2019 - All recommendations actioned and reported to Audit with relevant evidence; Report discussed at Governors; Chair of Governors completed and signed the Customer Feedback form; verification of tabs signed by SBM & Chair of Governors.
Declaration of Interest Register; Declaration of Interest Register reviewed and signed at Governors twice a year.
SBM/Finance Assistant provide separation of duties: Financial Policies & Procedures Manual updated and reviewed annually ; clear separation of duties kept in Policies & Procedures Manual, levels of authority, authorised signatories; LMS Bursar Service; Fraud and Corruption & Security Policies; Equipment Off Site Register; Gift & Hospitality Register; security cameras fitted in school & 24 hour surveillance; visitors accompanied around the school; safe & petty cash keys held by SBM/Heads' PA kept off site; LA recognised and approved contractors used; keycodes & fobs on internal doors; phone bills checked - private calls charged for.
Financial Policies & Procedures; Whistleblowing Policy reviewed and updated annually and displayed around school; details of Whistleblowing Policy is included in our school induction for all new staff; Whistleblowing Policy is available on the school website; Whistleblowing Policy displayed on all toilet doors.
Monthly tabs - checked by SBM/LMS Bursar; Period 6 & 9 Reports; Year end report; Capita support the SIMS FMS package; LA organise the CFR data.
Friends of JPC account audited annually by an external auditor; account information shared with the parents of JPC at annual meeting. Meetings minuted.

G. SFVS dashboard

29	Have the results of the dashboard been carefully considered and potential follow-up actions identified?	Q29 guidance
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Yes

As with the question relating to Benchmarking, due to the school being unique it is difficult to compare with other schools because there are no 'like for like' schools; results of the dashboard will be discussed at the next governors meeting (12.05.2021)
