

Introduction to the schools financial value standard (SFVS) checklist-

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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) – 2023/24

Summary of agreed action and timetable for reporting back:

Q1 – Skills audit for Governors required

Signature: (Chair of governing body / management committee)	<i>G Morley</i>
Full name of signatory:	Gary Morley
Date SFVS agreed by full governing body / management committee:	6th February 2024
Date SFVS submitted to local authority for review:	29th February 2024

Schools financial value standard (SFVS) checklist

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School name:	Risedale School
School LAEstab number:	815/4004

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?	Q1 guidance	In part	A school skills audit needs to be completed this academic year for all Governors as there have been significant changes in the membership to the Governing body. Five-year financial plans are reviewed and discussed at the focused Governing body meetings each term. The FMS Service is used to provide advice and guidance
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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?	Q2 guidance	Yes	The school has 6 full governing body meetings a year which are resources or curriculum focused. The May meeting each year focuses on Finance. It has clear terms of reference that are part of the Budget management policy and are reviewed at the beginning of the academic year. The Chair of the Governing body is a qualified accountant and has been a Governor for a several years
3	Does the governing body receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least 6 times a year?	Q3 guidance	Yes	The FMS Bursar provides clear and concise monitoring reports to the Governors at least 10 times a year. Questions are returned to the Bursar by members of the Governing body.
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	Yes	Declarations of Business Interests are updated annually by both the Governors and the staff. It is also a standard agenda item at each Governors meeting. The Register of Business Interests for Governors is published on the school website
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?	Q5 guidance	Yes	The school buys into the FMS bursar scheme and there is always cover when required

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?	Q6 guidance	Yes	<p>The school produces a five-year financial forecast at the start of the financial year. This is reviewed in the Autumn term and an updated budget is produced to reflect changes in pupil numbers, staffing structures, funding and any other major changes.</p> <p>The schools buy into the FMS service who use specialist budget planning software to produce the five-year financial forecasts.</p>
7	Does the school take an integrated approach to curriculum and financial planning?	Q7 guidance	Yes	<p>The Headteacher and Leadership team involve the Governors and bursar in any financial projects/plans. The Headteacher presents a report on Pupil Premium strategy which links to the school budget.</p>
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	<p>The school follows the guidance within The School Emergency Response guide 2016 which includes information on how the school should deal with a situation relating to business continuity or disaster recovery. The school completes the Asset Register for all equipment worth £100 or more, or items of a portable and attractive nature with a lower value. A list of Senior Leaders and staff with school ICT equipment is recorded by the IT section. This equipment can be used on and off site and is the responsibility of staff. Insurance has been secured from the LA.</p>

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?	Q9 guidance	Yes	The school sets its budget using the most up to date information with regard to pupil numbers, staffing and funding information and provides a 5-year projection. The school recognises the need to have a balanced budget. The school is in a surplus revenue position for the current year plus two. The school submits the draft before the 20 th May and the Revised Budget before the 31 st December on an annual basis.
10	Does the budget setting process allow sufficient time for the governing body to scrutinise and challenge the information provided?	Q10 guidance	Yes	The governors receive finance reports including the draft draft start and revised budgets at least 7 days prior to governor's meetings which provides the opportunity for information to be reviewed and considered prior to the meeting and the formal approval of the budgets.
11	Is the school/governing body 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	Yes	Pupil number projections are based on known demographic trends for the local area, including consideration of factors which may cause numbers to significantly change such as housing developments, regiment moves etc. The Garrison Commander is a member of the Governing body and is able to share information regarding regiment movement. Revised budgets are produced in the Autumn term and any changes in pupil numbers for the new academic year can be included in this updated financial forecast.

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 changes or from genuinely unforeseeable circumstances?	Q12 guidance	Yes	The monitoring reports highlight variances against from budgets set. A year end summary report with a list of variances and explanations is produced at the end of the year. An additional commentary report is provided by the Bursar
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	Balances are controlled as part of the overall financial planning process. Five-year budget planning helps to ensure good Balance management

D. Staffing

14	Does the school review its staffing structure regularly to ensure it is the best structure to meet the needs of the school whilst maintaining financial integrity?	Q14 guidance	Yes	Staffing is reviewed regularly as part of the process of matching the current and future teaching and learning needs of the school with available and future financial resources. All meetings discuss staffing on a regular basis and more detailed information is produced on the financial impact of changes when required.
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	Yes	It is normal practice to involve the School Improvement partner in the performance management which will include two Governors.
16	Has the school published on its website the number of employees (if any) whose gross salary exceeded £100k?	Q16 guidance	Yes	The school will list any employees on the school website whose gross salary exceeds £100k. This is a NIL return

17	Does the school benchmark the size of its senior leadership team annually against that of similar schools?	Q17 guidance	Yes	Benchmarking data is considered annually using schools of similar size and type both locally and nationally with the assistance of the FMS service. Variations from the "norm" are highlighted and provide a platform for discussion.
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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?	Q18 guidance	Yes	Benchmarking data is considered annually using schools of similar size and type both locally and nationally. Variations from the 'norm' are highlighted and provide a platform for discussion
19	Has the school leadership team considered the results of the self-assessment dashboard or other DfE benchmarking tools?	Q19 guidance	Yes	The school has used the self-assessment tool, and this has been considered alongside other benchmarking information. The school have also looked at the new VMFI tool.
20	Does the school have procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money?	Q20 guidance	Yes	Goods are ordered in accordance with NYCC Terms & Conditions and LMS Financial Procedure Rules/LMS Contract Procedure rules. The Director of Facilities who is employed by the school ensures that major contracts and renewals achieve best value.
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?	Q21 guidance	Yes	The School maintains a Contract Review Schedule which is reviewed annually by the Governing Body in order to inform procurement planning.

22	Does the school consider collaboration with others, for example, on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?	Q22 guidance	Yes	The school works closely with its feeder Primary schools
23	Does the school compare its non-staff expenditure against the DfE approved frameworks to ensure best value for money?	Q23 guidance	Yes	Non-staff expenditure is reviewed on a regular basis against the centrally negotiated framework agreements which form part of the DfE deals for schools
24	Does the school maintain its premises and other assets to an adequate standard and make best use of capital monies for this purpose?	Q24 guidance	Yes	The premises are reviewed by the LA Property Service and appropriate actions taken. The school buys into the DBE property services scheme for maintenance servicing. Day to day management is organised by the Director of Facilities.

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?	Q25 guidance	Yes	The latest Audit Report in November 2013 was rated "High Assurance". The School completes a self-evaluation regularly using the Financial control checklist
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)?	Q26 guidance	Yes	The Business Interest Register is updated annually. Opportunity to declare Business Interests is included on the agenda of all Governing Body and Committee Meetings. Procedures are in place to ensure that open and transparent procurement procedures are followed with regard to related party transactions. All third party transactions are recorded on the new template and submitted to the Local Authority on a termly

				basis. The template is appended to this document.
27	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)	Q27 guidance	Yes	The LMS Procedure Rules are followed at all times. Whenever possible there is a separation of duties. There have been no instances of fraud or theft in the last 12 months. The school is regularly visited by the neighbourhood police officer who maintains close contact with the school and community
28	Are all staff aware of the school's whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns?	Q28 guidance	Yes	Staff are made aware of the Policy within the Staff Handbook and by a poster in the staff room.
29	Does the school have an accounting system that is adequate and properly run and delivers accurate reports, including the consistent financial reporting return?	Q29 guidance	Yes	Software used for these purposes is approved by the LA and Veritau.
30	Does the school have adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds?	Q30 guidance	Yes	The School Fund is audited by Connie Wilson and a copy of the audited accounts are supplied to Veritau and reported on the Charity Commission website.