



Education  
Funding  
Agency

# Schools financial value standard (SFVS)

## Standard assessment form

<b>School Name</b>	<b>St Catherine's C of E Primary</b>
<b>School No</b>	<b>908 3797</b>
Once complete, please name your file: SFVSXXXX1516 and email it to: <a href="mailto:lfsteam@cornwall.gov.uk">lfsteam@cornwall.gov.uk</a> or send via securenet	

**March 2016**

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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: St Catherine's C of E Primary

LA and school DfE numbers: 908 3797

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	Chair of Finance Committee and members of the committee have a number of years financial monitoring experience. The Scheme of Delegation is reviewed each Autumn Term, together with Terms of Reference for Committees. These documents are located in Sections 1 & 2 of the SFVS Portfolio. Governors pro-actively challenge the schools financial position as a critical friend and this is demonstrated within the schools minutes, located in Office file and kept electronically.
2. Does the governing body have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair?	Yes	The Finance Committee chair has excellent finance skill and two Governors have business/ budgeting experience. Terms of Reference are reviewed and approved each Autumn Term at the FGB Meeting.

		These documents are located in the SFVS Portfolio.
3. Is there a clear definition of the relative responsibilities of the governing body and the school staff in the financial field?	Yes	The schools Scheme of Delegation and Governing Body Decision Planner clearly outlines the relevant positions and roles within the school from both Governing Body and School perspectives. These documents are located in the relevant sections of the SFVS Portfolio.
4. Does the governing body receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least three times a year?	Yes	Management Accounts prepared by the LFS Management Accountant, monitored by the Team Leader, placed onto SecureNet to be downloaded for HT. These are forwarded to the finance committee and monitored on a monthly basis; these are then forwarded to and reviewed by the FGB at each FGB meeting. These are filed in our SFVS Portfolio.
5. Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?	Yes	Pecuniary / Business Interest forms are completed each year at the FGB Meeting. There is then an 'Opportunity to Declare an Additional Pecuniary Interest' as an agenda item at each FGB Meeting.
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	The school buys into a Service Level Agreement with the Local Authorities LFS Team. In case of absence, additional financial support can also be purchased through this service.

7. Does the school review its staffing structure regularly?	Yes	School Staffing structure is reviewed as part of the schools SDP and as part of the budget setting and monitoring procedure. Evidence for this can be located in Section 7 of the SFVS Portfolio. Staffing levels are continually monitored in line with pupil numbers across the school.
8. Have your pay decisions been reached in accordance with a pay policy reflecting clear performance criteria?	Yes	Teaching Staff undergo performance review annually with a half yearly meeting to check progress towards achieving targets. Targets are linked into school development plan focus areas. Support is part of the local agreement and is line managed by their class teachers and overseen by the SENDCo, who is responsible for reviewing their deployment and effectiveness.
9. Has the use of professional independent advice informed part of the pay decision process in relation to the headteacher?	Yes	We are assigned an adviser who works with the Governing Body to set, monitor and review targets for the Head Teacher.
<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	The SDP and Budget located in the SFVS folder clearly show the way in which the two documents work alongside each other, together with continual assessing and monitoring through FGB and Committee minutes which demonstrate the

		links between the Budget and SDP.
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	Three year funding allocations are based on current funding and projected by the school and LFS team as an indication. These are used in conjunction with the schools SDP, pupil number projections, DFC Projected Allocation and staffing spread-sheets to forecast future budgets and highlight any areas that need monitoring. (documents are located in the SFVS Portfolio).
12. Does the school set a well-informed and balanced budget each year (with an agreed and timed plan for eliminating any deficit)?	Yes	The budget each year is set using the above data, compared with previous year's expenditure and balance whilst working alongside the SDP in line with government initiatives taking into consideration achievement levels across the school. The school will ensure that the budget does not go into deficit by identifying risks through forward financial planning.
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	The year-end budget position is forecast from 50% of the way through the year (i.e. October) and the year-end position continually analysed to ensure the budgeted position will be met. Specific Reserves and budget movement is closely monitored through thorough reporting via

		<p>Management Accounts produced by the LFS Team MA.</p> <p>Areas that need developing are taken to the Finance Committee for consideration.</p>
<p><b>C: Value for money</b></p>		
<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>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Benchmarking has been undertaken by the Finance Committee this term. The LFS Technician forwarded the link to DfE data and the HT presented to Governors school and national figures. Findings are reported to the FGB and the use of ArBor reports and DfE Benchmarking data aid the Governors' overview of spending. Benchmarking data is located in the SFVS Portfolio.</p>
<p>15. Does the school have procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The school have a Scheme of Delegation in the SFVS Folder, which clearly outlines the procurement, tendering and contract requirements. The school secretary attends finance training when required and receives in-service support from the LFS Technician.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The schools balances never exceed the recommended 14.5% (primary) balance at year end. All funds over and above this amount are held in specific reserves or are</p>

		<p>commitments to be paid in the following year. All specific reserves are approved and minuted at the Finance Committee and FGB Meeting and plans for future expenditure are part of the long term school development plan. Specific Reserves are held for ICT upgrade, Furniture and Curriculum replacement/ refurbishment and Premises for our 10% contribution to any planned building projects.</p>
<p>17. Does the school maintain its premises and other assets to an adequate standard to avoid future urgent need for replacement?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The school has a rolling programme for building and ICT equipment maintenance and replacement which is linked with the School Development Plan and 3 Year Budget Plan, in specific reserves located in the SVFS File. The school has updated its Asset Register. At present school is in good order but planned maintenance includes pupils' toilets refurbishment and external wall painting.</p>
<p>18. Does the school consider collaboration with others, eg on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The school works collaboratively with other schools as part of a local school group, in the area to share training costs and other purchases, where available. As an example Consortium gave us a 10% discount for the town schools partnership. We also negotiate prices with Martin Luck,</p>

		<p>Westcare and Imagine for consumables (or Martin Luck and other local businesses). We use internet searching to find the best value prices and respond to enquiries from local and national firms regarding a range of supplies and services. Purchases are made using the school credit card. This is monitored by the HT.</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>	<p>The school has continually :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Reviewed the lease of school photocopiers and sourced three quotes to obtain the best price and started the use of key coding to monitor use.</li> <li>b) Undertaken an SLA with Launceston College for ICT support to reduce costs of external technicians and inconsistent support.</li> <li>c) Used the internet to source the best prices for IT equipment and curriculum resources.</li> <li>d) Deployed HLTAs to cover PPA and short term absence of teaching staff.</li> <li>e) Deployed support staff to deliver early intervention support to begin to reduce need for intervention in upper KS – this is a long term strategy.</li> <li>f) Deployed staff between FS1 and FS2 classes that address SEND needs .</li> </ul>

		<b>Future plans</b> include reviewing our nursery provision to attract more numbers and respond to needs of working parents in term time and holidays.
<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	<p>The school had previously worked through the FMSIS standard (located in HT Office) and the suggestions made have been completed.</p> <p>The school buys in to the LFS Team Service who complete extensive checks as part of their service.</p>
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	<p>An inventory/asset register is located in school and kept up to date with all major purchases being entered. It is also available electronically. The school also ensures that members of staff sign for goods that they are taking off site and then signs again on their return to school. The Scheme of Delegation identifies cheque and purchase order signatories.</p> <p>Staff are aware and wary of unsolicited emails in case they are part of a scam. Staff are trained regularly to be aware of</p>

		such situations.
22. Are all staff aware of the school's whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns?	Yes	Whistleblowing Policy forms part of the Schools Finance Policy, located in the SFVS folder, and is reviewed on an annual basis and has an allocated Whistleblowing Governor. Governors and Staff are required to read and understand the policy kept in a central file.
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	The school uses the Capita Software package FMS which is supported by the Local Authority and for which quarterly and annual returns can be located in the SFVS folder.
24. Does the school have adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds?	Yes	Private Funds are audited / verified on an annual basis and the school holds a constitution for the Private Fund, approved by the FGB on an annual basis. These documents are located in the SFVS Portfolio.
25. Does the school have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up-to-date asset register and adequate insurance?	Yes	Insurance is bought in through the Local Authority.  In addition to this the schools Inventory or Asset Register is kept up to date and is available electronically. This ensures that

		<p>there is evidence of the goods if the school should need to make an insurance claim. Finance records are backed up remotely and can be accessed to recover orders and items received.</p> <p>An Emergency Action Plan has been drawn up and ratified by Governors.</p>
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## Outcome of self-assessment

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

St Catherine's C of E Primary Schools Finance Committee have worked through the standard and believe that the comments made and evidence given are a true reflection of the school's practice.

Areas for selected for development in 15/16

- To maintain current policies, attend relevant training and keep up to date with new procedures through our accounting technician.
- To complete our business continuity plan and risk register.
- Audit private fund account for 14/15 in August 2015.

**All the above completed.**

Areas for Development in 16/17:

- Continue to audit private funds annually. Finance Secretary to maintain records for private fund, and Friends account.
- Nursery Teacher to transfer from paper accounting to electronic spreadsheet.
- Implement Emergency Action Plan and ensure that staff and parents are aware of procedures in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure successful conversion to academy status within An Daras MAT. Through close liaison with Business Manager.
- Finance Staff/ Governors to attend relevant training as required.

Signature: Rebecca Brewer / Eoin Gillespie Chair of Governors/ Finance Committee

Print full name of signatory/s : Rebecca Brewer/ Eoin Gillespie

Print date SFVS agreed by full governing body/management committee: Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016 – Full Board agreement. Submitted to Finance Committee 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

Date SFVS submitted to LA for review: 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016



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