

Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) assessment form

School name: icollege alternative education **LA:** WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL **DfE no:** 8691112

Info: Governing Body = Management Committee (MC)

A: The governing body and school staff	
	Comments, evidence and proposed actions
<p>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?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>1: Experience: Chair of Finance Committee (FC) former Director of Children’s Services for Swindon Borough Council who had oversight of a £28mill budget. Vice Chair (VC) served on a finance committee of a VA primary school for 15 years. FC clerk has experience as an auditor for councils and schools and provides active support to Governors.</p> <p>Training: Members of Finance Committee have attended relevant training when available. Chair FC attended West Berks training on Effective Financial Management training & The role of the Finance Governor on the 21st June & 5th July 17. She has also been training in local government finance, audit, best value in her role as DCS. The VC attended 5.10.16 ‘Effective Financial Management - Schools and Governors Working Together’ and 7.12.16 ‘Managing Redundancies’ training and will be doing WBC Finance for Governors training on 30.1.18 and 22.2.18.</p> <p>2: Skills analysis matrix for the financial management skills completed for all relevant staff and governors copies in SFVS file. Forms sent out again in September/October 2017 for updates. This showed a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills in relation to finance and governance and January 2018 Claire White (WBC School’s Finance Manager) agreed to be appointed as an LA Governor, her term will start in May 2018. This will greatly enhance governors’ knowledge and expertise in this area.</p> <p>3: Access Accountancy Support when necessary. Governors & the HT (Headteacher) have found the senior finance officers of the council supportive and accessible. However the transfer over by the LA to new budgeting e-software coinciding with the restructure of the PRU to icollege did lead to a delay in getting timely monitoring reports.</p> <p>4: icollege HT is a governor at Basildon Primary School and is a member of the finance committee, hence is able to bring the perspective of that to the work of icollege.</p>

		<p>Proposed actions</p> <p>Action 1: Work with WBC accountancy to ensure smooth transfer of financial systems from ACS to icollege.</p>
2. Does the governing body have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair?	Yes	<p>5: Yes, there is an active FC (Finance Committee) see 1 above for details.</p> <p>6: Terms of Reference (TOR) for FC monitors the framework within which the icollege operates with regards to: Conducting their finances. Delegating financial responsibilities and methods of operation so all parties concerned are aware of their duties and responsibilities and that sound and effective internal financial controls are maintained. These were produced after consultation with CC (Caroline Corcoran WBC Service Manager; Access, Planning, Governance & Trading) and WBC Governor Services. TORs reviewed and approved at 7.9.17 MC (management Committee) and are reviewed annually.</p> <p>7: The FC meets at least 4 times a year, the dates are set annually in advance. Minutes from this committee are distributed to all governors. There is also an opportunity to raise finance issues if necessary at the other 13 MC committee meetings throughout the year.</p>
3. Is there a clear definition of the relative responsibilities of the governing body and the school staff in the financial field?	Yes	<p>8: Existing Financial Management & Procedure Policy sets out the general structure of financial responsibility and financial control requirements and incorporates a clear schemes of delegation so that authority for approval limits on all financial decisions are clear to staff and governors. It is under review, transferred to icollege format and will go to 28.3.18 FC meeting for approval.</p> <p>Each units spending is monitored by the SBM who prepares monthly documents of spend against budget prepared as part of month end work. All relevant staff are aware and follow procedures.</p> <p>9: MC Standing Orders and FC Terms of Reference approved by MC 7.9.17, they are be reviewed annually.</p> <p>10: SBM supplies guidelines on; paying cheques, raising orders, varying staff sign off levels. SBM works closely with units Admin officers and their spending monitored when updating BMRs (Budget Monitoring Report).</p> <p>11: ACS Audit Report received March 2017, FC will review and implement 'Points to Note' if applicable to icollege.</p>

<p>4. Does the governing body receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least three times a year?</p>	<p>In part</p>	<p>13: Governors have asked that WBC template Budget Monitoring Report (BMR) to governors and FINAL School Budget Plan Proforma 2017-18 for SCHOOLS v1 used to report to governors. Reports to go to 4 FC meetings and BMR also goes to 4 full MC's throughout the year. The BMR includes info on; Main School Budget, Pupil Premium, Primary Sports Fund, Capital Budget, Home Education Budget recording % spend % year gone and over/underspend figures.</p> <p>14: Governors, currently reviewing process as the transition process has resulted in above system not being fully implemented. Once new financial system implemented will agree and implement a simpler more streamlined high level reporting for Governors. FC committee to meet monthly from Jan 2018 to monitor progress.</p>
<p>5. Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>15: All MC meetings have 'Declarations of Interest' as an agenda item for every MC meeting and all governors complete Register of Governors Interest annually at first full MC of academic year.</p>
<p>6. Does the school have access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including when specialist finance staff are absent, e.g. on sick leave?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>16: Currently Admin Officers can place orders but none can pay invoices or do reconciliations. WBC pays wages and SBM does timesheet claims reports, which have to be in by the 10th of the month. Service to look at setting up BACS payment system.</p> <p>17: SBM is covered by supply insurance and current SLA covers help with payroll. We would consult WBC Accountancy in the event of a long - term absence.</p>
		<p>Proposed actions Action 2: FC to review wether to set up BACS payment system. Action 3: FC to review Contingency Plan taking into account new service structure.</p>
<p>7. Does the school review its staffing structure regularly?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>18: A major staff restructure was carried out during the JSR (Joint Strategic Review). A HTD (Headteacher Designate) was appointed in October 2016, who was tasked with restructuring the service for implementation September 2017. The staffing structure will continue to be reviewed, based on icollege needs, and governors will be kept informed via the PERS (Personnel) committee) and FC.</p>

		<p>19: Recruitment requirements and staff leavers will be reported to PERS committee which meets 3 times throughout the academic year and if necessary to the FC which meets 4 times throughout the academic year or full MC which meets 4 times a year. 'Matters referred from other committees for consideration' is an item on all full MC agendas.</p> <p>20: Staffing structure info, without pay scales went to 13.7.16 full MC. HT advises governors of any changes via Headteachers Report and at next available committee meeting. Updated restructure proposals discussed at 26.1.18 FC.</p> <p>21: School Contract Information Report available from SIMS, via SBM, to go to FC to be signed of by Chair of FPC.</p>
8. Have your pay decisions been reached in accordance with a pay policy reflecting clear performance criteria?	Yes	22: Pay decisions, for 2017/18 Academic Year, were reached in accordance with the Pay Policy, (produced using the WBC model) using clear performance criteria and was approved by governors.
9. Has the use of professional independent advice informed part of the pay decision process in relation to the headteacher?	Yes	23: Performance Appraisal Panel, made up of Chairs of all MC committees, was approved at 7.9.17 full MC. External Advisor appointed annually who reviews HT performance and advises governors who carry out HT annual appraisals.
B: Setting the budget		
10. Is there a clear and demonstrable link between the school's budgeting and its plan for raising standards and attainment?	In part	<p>24: Headteachers Report is used to report to governors, regularly, throughout the year. It includes contextual updates on NOR, cohorts, attendance, outcomes for learners, personal development, welfare and effectiveness of programmes and use of PPG and its effectiveness.</p> <p>25: SDP is shared with governors and is used in budget setting so costs will be included in relevant years budget. Draft going to 30.1.18 PERS committee.</p> <p>26: Outcomes of appraisal procedures and pupil progress data are reported to governors regularly throughout the year. If any changes to teaching are identified, that could impact on budgets, these are taken into account.</p>

		<p>Proposed actions</p> <p>Action 4: Work towards producing a costed development plan for raising standards and attainment to be fed into the schools budget plan. Establish whether the SDP could include detailed costings at ledger code level for year 1 after that, high level costs may be included. CW advised that this will help identify Value for Money. Update to 26.6.18 FC.</p>
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?	In part	<p>27: Detailed in year projections are made for each budget code to identify any concerns, these are highlighted at FC meetings and if urgent Chair FC or Chair MC advised or it is brought up at next MC meeting, either an FC meeting or under 'Matters from other committees' item on all full MC meeting agendas. 3 year budget continues to be difficult due to the nature of the service.</p> <p>28: icollege is reliant on annual LA decision on funding, in consultation with the Heads Funding Group and Schools Forum. Daily rate has increased to £97/day/student. Schools are now paying a larger percentage of placement costs. Funding currently based on 66 placements.</p>
		<p>Proposed actions</p> <p>Action 5: Advise those making the decisions re funding that reduced funding will result in fewer placements being available.</p>
12. Does the school set a well-informed and balanced budget each year (with an agreed and timed plan for eliminating any deficit)?	In part	<p>29: Currently in transition period between old and new service. ACS and RS budgets for 17/18 were set as surplus budgets. Transfer from ACS to icollege budgets continuing through Terms 1, 2 and 3. Icollege purchasing extra WBC Accountancy support to aid transfer.</p>
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?	In part	<p>30: See above. JSR advised that once ACS and RS closed surplus will carry forward to icollege. Budget projections will not be possible until this happens.</p> <p>31: Governors have asked that HLS goes to at the 4 FC meeting and 4 full MC meetings throughout the year, which highlights % spend % year and any significant variances.</p> <p>32: Agresso and FMS reconciled monthly, HT and SBM meet monthly FC gets BMR's with SBM commentaries, noting concerns or passing on information, at the 4 FC meetings throughout academic year and there are opportunities to report on financial matters at other 13 MC meetings throughout the year. Headteacher's Financial Checklist completed monthly.</p>

C: Value for money		
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	33: Using Statistical First Release national data for Alternative Provision. Currently waiting for most recent data. SBM uses CFR Benchmarking data.
15. Does the school have procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money?	Yes	34: Updated WBC Financial Rules have been included in the revised Financial Management & Procedure Policy this information is currently kept on both 'N Drive' (Headteachers Policies and Procedures) and 'P Drive' (icollege Admin Policies and Procedures) and SBM has a hard copy. This information will be transferred to new location, Share Point asap. 35: Agresso complies with DfE annual CFR requirements. Icollege has procedures for; Imprest, Invoice Payment, Receipt of Deliveries, Petty Cash including petty cash checks and expenditure authorisation. They are kept on PDrive, hard copy on SBM's desk, SLA Online central library for all processes.
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?	In part	36: Headteacher Designate (HTD) was appointed in November 2016 and produced a restructuring model, including finance. Restructuring process was completed by end of the 16/17 academic year. As per WBC Accountancy advice budget transfer from ACS and RS to icollege to begin in Sept 2017. 37: Still in transition to icollege therefore position will be reviewed at financial year end.
17. Does the school maintain its premises and other assets to an adequate standard to avoid future urgent need for replacement?	Yes	38: MC gets regular reports on premises needs via the H&SP (Health & Safety and Premises Committee) and matters referred from other committees for consideration' is an item on agendas for all full MC meetings. Health & Safety governor appointed and visits to take place in Jan 2108.. As a result of the JSR icollege now has 4 units not 6. LA owns buildings and icollege pays for upkeep but not issues resulting in initial building work, caretaker now appointed for icollege. 39: Inventories for all units currently under review. 40: H&S Lead and H&S Co ordinator appointed, work with SBM and Admin officers in each unit to

		plan maintenance.
18. Does the school consider collaboration with others, e.g. on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?	Yes	41: ACS and RS now amalgamated to form the icollege and new staff teams in the 4 units. 42: Use All School Communication web forum. 43: Use other outside services include; Outdoor Academy, Connexions, Adviza, SKIDS, work experience providers, Newbury and Reading colleges.
19. Can the school give examples of where it has improved the use of resources during the past year?	Yes	44: Good practice from former service shared during restructuring period and in new service, new staff teams deployed across sites. 45: Reviewing structure as a result of Schools Forum decision to reduce funding for HE and OR. Currently reviewing primary curriculum provision. 46: Using WBC IT team to support amalgamation of IT systems and appointed IT support officer who spends half a day in each unit.
D: Protecting public money		
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	47: ACS had full 3 day audit 7/8.3.16 and 10.3.16. Final Audit report published March 2017. Governors will carry relevant suggestions forward to new service if still appropriate.
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	48: Adopted WBC; Financial Control Check List, Rules & Procedures, Anti Fraud Corruption Strategies at 23.4.14 ACS FPC. 49: SBM checks each unit's admin officers petty cash receipts and records spend on BMR. Petty cash tins also checked regularly. 50: icollege has Procurement Card for all orders, which has assisted in small orders. Personal cards were occasionally used during Sept/Oct whilst waiting for new cards to arrive.

		<p>51: Additional hours claims and travel have to be approved and signed by a member of the SLT. SBM uses FMS notes for guidance and date requirements.</p> <p>52: Currently in the process of transferring protocols and procedures - for managing office security for petty cash, cheque books, procurement card, procedures receiving/checking goods, works/services, management imprest account from PDrive to Share Point.</p> <p>53: Admin staff and SBM are the only ones with access to petty cash. SBM is the only one who has access to the cheque book. Card holders, only have access to PCard, there is only one Imprest account, which is managed by the SBM.</p> <p>54: SBM to resume doing monthly checklist in Jan/Feb 18, now new cost centres set up. Clerk to include as a standard question on FC agendas.</p> <p>55: No instances of fraud or theft detected in the last 12 months.</p>
22. Are all staff aware of the school's whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns?	Yes	56: Whistleblowing Policy has been approved and is on icollege website and Share Point.
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	57: icollege uses Agresso and FMS, software, fully integrated accounts payable system and SIMS, reconciled to LA ledger with Agresso. Regular bank reconciliations are done with FMS. Agresso/FMS reconciliation done monthly at the end of each period.
24. Does the school have adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds?	N/A	58: icollege doesn't operate a private fund account.
25. Does the school have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up-to-date asset register and	Yes	59: There is a critical incidence plan and step by step guides for a variety of situations these are available in each unit electronically on the P Drive (in process of transferring to Share Point). Critical Incidence Plan (CIP) is under review by H&S Lead, H&S Co ordinator and H&S Governor. Asset Inventory is under review

adequate insurance?		60: icollege has LA Service Level Agreements (SLA) for insurance including Staff Insurance cover for absences longer than 5 days for old ACS lead teachers, to be reviewed for next financial year.
		Proposed actions Action 6: Once Critical Incident Plans updated, IT support will put on Share Point and ensure hard copies in each unit admin office.

Outcome of self-assessment

E: Summary of proposed action and timetable for reporting back

Item	Refers to questions	Proposed action:	When:	By Who:
1.	1	Action 1: Work with WBC accountancy to ensure smooth transfer of financial systems from ACS to icollege.	Sept 2018 Ongoing	SBM/FC
2.	6	Action 2: FC to review whether to set up BACS payment system. Action 3: FC to review Contingency Plan taking into account new service structure.	2017/2018 Academic Year	FC
3.	10	Action 4: Work towards producing a costed development plan for raising standards and attainment to be fed into the schools budget plan. Establish whether the SDP could include detailed costings at ledger code level for year 1 after that, high level costs may be included. CW advised that this will help identify Value for Money. Update to 6.3.18 FC.	2017/2018 Academic Year	FC
4.	11	Action 5: Advise those making the decisions re funding that reduced funding will result in fewer placements being available.	2017/2018 Academic Year	MC
5.	25	Action 6: Once Critical Incident Plans updated, IT support will put on Share Point and ensure hard copies in each unit admin office.	2017/2018 Academic Year	H&S Co Ord H&S Gov

Signatures:



Management Committee Vice Chair Date: 20.3.18

Print full name of signatory: Chrys Healy

Date approved: 20.3.18

Date: SFVS submitted to LA Schools Audit: 20.3.18