

Queensmill School

Schools' Financial Value Standards

Adopted by full Governing Body Thursday 17th March 2016

Signed by Chair of Governors, 17 03 16: *Mike Walsh*

(Original signed copy at the school)

The assessment form

School name: QUEENSMILL SCHOOL

LA and school DfE numbers:205/7014

List of questions	Answer (yes/in part/no)	Comments, evidence and proposed actions
A: The governing body and school staff		
<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>	Yes	<p>-Governors provide strategic leadership by understanding the SDP and its implications. -Governors know of all the impending expansion plans of the school (Post 19 and respite) and understand their budgetary implications. -Governors are aware of our goal to keep staffing cost to approximately 83% of the budget in order to provide adequate resources for an exciting and motivating curriculum. -Governors have copies of financial regulations. -Finance Committee meetings include the borough's finance officer, who updates the committee on the budget monitoring process. -The school communicates its financial performance to parents and the public in a clear and concise manner via the SDP –</p>

		<p>which is published on the school website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Governors Finance Committee members probe and challenge budget data and projections. -Governors have the necessary financial skills. (The Chair is a trained financials analyst and an ex fund manager, another governor is very experienced in managing large company budgets) <p>The school receives favourable audit assessments. (LA and Ofsted)</p>
<p>2. Does the governing body have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair?</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Finance Committee meets termly, is quorate and includes the LA finance officer as well as the school's Business/Finance manager. -Governors have the committee terms of reference, which is renewed and adopted annually by the full Governing Body. -The Chair of Finance is a trained financials analyst who worked in investment banking and fund management for 15 years. Another member, who is also the Chair of Governors is highly experienced at managing large scale budgets in the private sector. -A new associate member is in the process of being added in.
<p>3. Is there a clear definition of the relative responsibilities of the governing body and the school staff in the financial field?</p>	Yes	<p>Described in the Hammersmith & Fulham Scheme for Financing Schools, the Financial Procedures Manual, A good Practice Guide to the Statement of Internal Control and the School's Terms of Reference for Committee Structure and Schemes of Delegation.</p>

		 Enc A - 2015-16 Cttee Structure TOR  Staff list.pdf
4. Does the governing body receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least three times a year?	Yes	<p>-The finance committee receives a concise budget monitoring report agreed by the LA at each finance committee meeting (3 times a year). The full governing body receives the agreed balanced budget at the Full Governing Body meeting closest to the receipt of the budget.</p> <p>-Governors constantly query the LA about financial issues which are outside the control of the school but within the remit of the LA. The Chair of Finance will meet with the LA Finance Officer in between meetings if necessary.</p>
5. Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?	Yes	<p>-Pecuniary interest forms are completed at each full Governing Body meeting including that of the Business/Finance Manager who attends Governing Body meetings.</p> <p>-Pecuniary interest forms are also completed by the Site Manager responsible to get petty cash from the bank with signatures from agreed members of staff and by those members of the Senior Management Team who are not on the Governing Body but who can also co-sign cheques.</p>
6. Does the school have access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including	Yes	The Service Level Agreement with the LA provides for this. The school has recently

when specialist finance staff are absent, eg on sick leave?		employed a Finance Officer to provide additional support within the admin team.
7. Does the school review its staffing structure regularly?	Yes	<p>The school constantly reviews its staffing structure according to a variety of needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pupil intake: the number of pupils in each class and the severity of need of those pupils will trigger the need for more teaching assistants. -Changes in the curriculum. -Career progression. -Staff retention, as high quality long service is extremely valuable for the expanding needs of the school. -Larger leadership team to cater for the growth of the school: 2 deputy heads, one additional assistant head and 9 middle managers. -Annual increments if performance remains at expected levels. -The expansion of the school and its fully owned units (Fulham Primary Queensmill Unit, Fulham College Boys, Fulham Cross for Girls) -The staffing structure will be reviewed shortly to accommodate for the respite facility and the growing post 19 provision.
8. Have your pay decisions been reached in accordance with a pay policy reflecting clear performance criteria?	Yes	<p>See attached pay policy adopted by governors on 19th November 2015</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Queensmill School Pay Policy.pdf</p> </div>

9. Has the use of professional independent advice informed part of the pay decision process in relation to the headteacher?	No	Independent advice will be sought for the next review.
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?	Yes	<p>-Staffing budget in a Special School is higher than in mainstream because of the complexity of the needs of the pupils. The school aims for a staff to total budget ratio of 83% to provide resources for an exciting curriculum whilst not compromise on health and safety. The ratio is currently low at 76% with the school bedding down the changes associated with the move to Askham Road.</p> <p>-The School Development Plan shows the breakdown of the Pupil Premium Funding, the assessment data shows its impact.</p> <p>-Classroom monitoring reports show how the school keeps teaching and learning at outstanding levels and these are linked to pay progression.</p> <p> Queensmill School SEF SDP 2015 2017.p</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?	Yes	Forward projection is possible for each established class as we know each needs a teacher and up to 5 teaching assistants. However, there are important limitations on budget projections for a number of rea-

		<p>sons: a) Admissions throughout the year, b) Number of pupils moving from Queensmill to Queensmill units in mainstream settings, c) The opening of in-house respite facility and the expansion of the post 19 to a remote site d) Changes in the experience level of the staff pool: assumptions must be made on retention of long-serving staff and new recruits requiring training. Intelligent estimates are made, leading to a reasonable forward budget plan which might need adjusting to reflect the local demand once a year. However, the LA Finance Officer does generate a 3 year Projection. The school is planning to expand its existing SLA with 3BM to include a budget-planning tool.</p>
<p>12. Does the school set a well-informed and balanced budget each year (with an agreed and timed plan for eliminating any deficit)?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The school retains a sizeable positive carry forward consistent with the expansion needs of the school, specifically the establishment and registration of a children's home (for overnight respite) and the growth of the post 19 provision. The decision to have all unit staff on the Queensmill payroll simplifies the budgeting requirements and avoid payment issues with the LA.</p>
<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?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>See answer to Question 12. Constant dialogue with the LA Finance Officer ensures that any significant variation from the budget is communicated as soon as it arises.</p>

C: Value for money

<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>The Head regularly meets with PLASN (Pan London Autism Special Network – 12 schools with similar intakes to Queensmill, set up 5 years ago entirely for this purpose. We tend to compare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -% of budget spent on staffing, teaching and non-teaching -% spend on sick leave. -Type of spend the Pupil Premium Funding is used for. <p>The school also monitors data from DFE performance tables to compare how Queensmill spends against other special schools in the borough and other special schools nationally. Excluding this year's figures, which were distorted by the move to the new build, Queensmill tends to spend more on staff than other schools and noticeably more on education of support staff and noticeably less on teaching staff and supply teachers.</p> <p>Further benchmarking has taken place comparing Queensmill to local special schools</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>When taking out new contracts/agreements, the school obtains quotes in line with the Financial Procedures manual relating to Purchasing. Quotes are then presented to the Head. If the school enters an operating lease agreement, a copy of the lease is sent to</p>

		<p>the Chief Accountant in Education Finance before proceeding. Staff should check with budget holders before they place orders. When the budget holder authorises it, the order is then submitted to the Business/Finance Manager on an order form to ensure all authorisations have been obtained. The order is then put into the Head's tray for authorisation. (In the Head's absence, Deputy Headteachers can authorise orders). When returned signed to the Business/Finance Manager, the order is placed in the School's Financial System (FMS) to generate an official purchase order which is sent to the supplier. A copy is kept in the order file. When received, the invoice is stamped so that cost centres, charges, VAT can be noted down. The invoice is attached to the purchase order and delivery note. When no delivery note is received, the budget holder signs the invoice to acknowledge the items have been received. A cheque is then raised, with all the documentation submitted to the Head who signs the authorising cheque and the stamped invoice. Cheques over £500 require two signatures from the four additional signatories on the School cheque account. Contracts are reviewed at the end of their term to ensure Best Value. Scheme of delegation attached.</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>Balances are kept at reasonable levels to account for the ongoing expansion of the school, the bedding down of running costs</p>

		<p>on the new site and the forthcoming increasing in national insurance contributions as well as pension contributions. With the scheduled opening of the respite facility and the expansion of the post 19 division on a dedicated site, the most likely use of the carry forward will be increased staffing. It will also be used to cover the cost of pupil admission through the year or the possible reduction in the SEN funding per child.</p>
<p>17. Does the school maintain its premises and other assets to an adequate standard to avoid future urgent need for replacement?</p>	Yes	<p>Great care is taken to look after the new state of the art new build. Since the move, one additional care taker has been appointed, bringing the total to three full time staff. The existing building maintenance plan is being revised to reflect recent developments and planned developments including proposed adaptations for the children's home.</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>	No	<p>-The high degree of specialist provision makes it difficult. Joint funding was tried at FPQU but failed. The LA Financial services confirmed this is a difficult proposition for Queensmill. Having said this, Queensmill would be prepared to review this if a fresh opportunity arose. -Being part of the West London Teaching School Alliance (WLTSA) with 12 other schools, we have greater purchasing power and achieve better value for money for staff training.</p>

<p>19. Can the school give examples of where it has improved the use of resources during the past year?</p>	<p>The school has, for a number of years, and in this particular year, made use of the governments School's Direct programme. This benefits the school in a number of ways: namely highly motivated but relatively inexpensive teachers who are mentored by senior colleagues. This approach saves significant amounts on teacher recruitment (advertising) but for mainscale teacher posts, smaller salaries are paid.</p> <p>The school does not use agency staff. Teacher and support staff absence is managed internally with HLTA's used predominantly, to manage teacher absences. For staff development, the school deploys 'in-house' trainers where possible who have been trained to lead staff in specific interventions such as 'Team Teach'; 'PECS' or 'TEACCH'.</p> <p>Consumables, teaching and learning resources and activities are always sourced from a range competitive options to as far as possible, ensure 'value for money'.</p> <p>The school is currently working on a plan to charge for the provision of its outreach services currently delivered for free to around 36 schools.</p>
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D: Protecting public money

<p>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?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>-Governors Body Meetings notes and Pecuniary interests' forms are filed appropriately. -Nothing is required from the LA. -Nothing is required from Ofsted which rated the school outstanding during its last review in October 2014.</p>
<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)?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>-No fraud or theft were detected in the last 12 months. -The school follows the Financial Procedures Manual and that practice is verified continuously by the Borough. This safeguards against fraud or theft by staff, including the practice of including two signatures on cheques over £500 and also via the monthly returns to the LA.</p>
<p>22. Are all staff aware of the school's whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>-All staff are trained in it annually and sign a form each time to say they understand it and will abide by it. -It is written into the whistleblowing policy that staff can talk to the Head, the Chair of Governors or the LA. All 'whistleblowing' procedures are detailed in the schools safeguarding policy. Specifically this details the school's procedure for managing allegations and where that person may be the headteacher, who, within the LA, is to be contacted and their telephone number.</p>

<p>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?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>See above, use of the Financial Procedures Manual as well as the monthly reconciliation reports sent to the LA. The departure of the LA member of staff in charge of these monthly reconciliation has put extraordinary pressure on the school this year.. The school uses the FMS finance system..</p>
<p>24. Does the school have adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds?</p>	<p>Yes,</p>	<p>Voluntary funds are audited and reconciled by the Chair of Finance once a year, the business manager regularly reconciles the account which is signed off by the head-teacher each term</p>
<p>25. Does the school have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up-to-date asset register and adequate insurance?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All insurance cover is provided by the LA via Zurich Insurance. This covers all public liability issues. -Inventory is in place for all ICT equipment in the school.. Security tagging of all equipment is being undertaken. -Inventory is in place for all furniture and equipment in each class room. -Emergency evacuation planning is in place. -All registers are up to date with current pupils listed in each class. Deputy Head and Site Care manager have completed a draft form of the disaster recovery plan.

Outcome of self-assessment

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

Signature: _____ Chair of Governors / Management Committee

Print full name of signatory: _____

Print date SFVS agreed by full governing body/management committee: _____

Date SFVS submitted to LA for review: _____

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Reference: EFA-00133-2015



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