

Financial Benchmarking Report (Based on 2017-18 data)

Schools Financial Benchmarking Service

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-financial-efficiency-financial-benchmarking>

School Resource Management: top 10 planning checks for governors

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-resource-management-top-10-planning-checks-for-governors>

Based on 15 similar schools nationally as selected by the comparison tool (maintained primary, 84-94 pupils) and the 10 locality primary schools

Planning Check	Suggested Questions	Observations	Governing Body Observations
Staff pay as percentage of total expenditure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What percentage of the budget is spent on staffing compared with similar schools? 2. How does the percentage for teaching staff, curriculum support staff and other support staff compare with other similar schools? 3. How do your school's pupil outcomes – such as your school's progress score – compare with other similar schools, relative to spend on staffing? 4. What is the overall staff cost as a percentage of total income? Staffing costs over 80% of total income are considered high. 5. If teaching costs are relatively high, is this due to the number of teachers or a relatively high proportion of highly-paid staff? 	<p>15 'Similar' Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff expenditure £425,987 – highest in group of similar schools ▪ WP staff costs represent 79.6% of total expenditure <p>10 Locality Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff expenditure highest on a per pupil basis @ £4,841 (range £2,888 to £4,841) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ high staff to pupil ratio, experienced (therefore highly paid) staff ▪ Compared with locality schools of varying sizes, the impact of the lump sum will be highest on smaller schools ▪ Progress scores are more favourable than locality schools ▪ Staff cost as a percentage broadly in line with locality schools. Range of 70-82% with 3 schools around 77%, 3 around 79% and 2 around 81%.
Average teacher cost	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the average teacher cost is high in comparison with other similar schools, why is this? The schools financial benchmarking service includes staffing cost per teacher (in the 'expenditure' section). Is this due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the staffing grade profile, such as a high number of staff on the upper pay scale, or ▪ the responsibilities structure in the school, such as the Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) scale, or ▪ another reason? 2. How far is your school using its pay flexibilities – for example, to differentiate pay by teachers' performance? 	<p>15 'Similar' Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ £71,000 – 7th highest – broadly in line with other similar schools (range £46k to £100k) ▪ Teaching staff 6th lowest ▪ Supply staff highest @ £6,302 (average = £2,919) <p>10 Locality Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher cost per pupil 2nd highest @ £3,240. ▪ Billingshurst lowest @ £1,974 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do other schools cover staff absence? HLTA? Cover supervisor? ▪ Broadly experienced staff on upper pay scale. Not TLRs. ▪ Class sizes are small at WP so compared with larger primaries with bigger class sizes, this is to be expected.

Pupil-to-teacher ratio (PTR)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the PTR for different key stages within their schools? 2. How does the school's PTR compare with similar schools? If it's significantly different, what is the reason for this? 3. How does the ratio of pupils to staff compare with similar schools? 	<p><u>15 'Similar' Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 14.67 – 4th lowest (range from 12.05 to 24) ▪ Teaching assistants – middle (8th) @ 26.67 pupils per TA (range from 21.36 to 50) ▪ Whole school workforce – 7.65 pupils per staff member – 3rd lowest <p><u>10 Locality Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PTR 2nd lowest. Range of 12.63 to 23.23 ▪ Billingshurst lowest @ £1,974 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PTR broadly in line with similar schools. ▪ Teaching assistants average
Class sizes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the average class sizes by key stage, and by options at key stages 4 and 5? 2. What class sizes does your school aim to achieve – and what is the educational reason for this? 3. Are there any small classes where the per pupil funding does not cover the cost of delivery? 4. Do you know the maximum average class size that the school can operate at within the context of the pupil admissions, the structure of the building, the numbers in different year groups and the need for intervention strategies? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 88 pupils – 4 classes = 22 pupils per class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current NOR approx 78 = 19.5 pupils per class which is not sustainable ▪ Ideal class size would be 30 ▪ School could manage more than 30 pupils per class in KS2 ▪ Governors to investigate breakeven point linked to pupil numbers for 2019-20 and 2020-21
Teacher contact ratio	N/A for primary schools		
Proportion of budget spent on the leadership team	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does this compare with similar schools, taking into account any contact time the leadership staff have? 2. If there is more than one school in your trust or federation, are the leadership structures proportionally the same? 3. How has your school made decisions on the proportion of its budget to be spent on the leadership team? 4. If this is relatively high or low compared with similar schools, is this because of the size of the leadership team, or their pay? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impossible to compare as WP shows 2 members of staff but only 1 is non-teaching. Comparison would not be possible as data not available for other schools in terms of expenditure, only by number of people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governors have considered structure of leadership team and debated if to have an assistant headteacher or replace outgoing post holder with a senior teacher. Discussion ongoing.
3 to 5 year budget projections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How confident are you that pupil number projections are realistic? If there is uncertainty then boards should be given 3 scenarios: cautious, likely, and optimistic. This applies to all key assumptions but especially pupil number projections and funding rate assumptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupil projections from County are unreliable as data provided varies hugely from one year to the next. ▪ 3 year budget reviewed November 2018 and ongoing. 3 year budget has informed future planning of the school in terms of structure and staffing to ensure a balanced budget. 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If the optimistic scenario indicates financial difficulties, is the school developing a recovery plan now? If the cautious budget indicates potential financial difficulties, what contingency plans does the school have to overcome them? Are there any issues in the medium term that should be addressed now? How will current decisions impact medium-term budgets? What do we need to put in place now to ensure we have the necessary funding in the future? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bursar to do financial projections based on similar, lower and higher pupil numbers to show impact on budget and expenditure. Governors to work with HT and bursar to cost wraparound care and minimum numbers for this to be viable.
Spend per pupil for non-pay expenditure lines compared to similar schools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is the spend per pupil for catering, ICT, estates management, business administration, energy and curriculum supplies? If benchmarking indicates a relatively high spend on a particular expenditure line do you know why? Are the reasons unavoidable or are further efficiencies possible? If the cost of energy seems high compared with similar schools, can you invest in energy-saving measures to reduce the cost? If spend on learning resources seems high compared to similar schools, are there opportunities for collaborating with other local schools to bring costs down? 	<div> <div> 15 'Similar' Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Premises: 4th highest @ £28.2k (average is £20.4k) Occupation (energy, water, sewerage, rates, insurance etc): 2nd lowest @ £33.8k. 5th lowest on per pupil basis Supplies and Services (eg stationery & curriculum resources): 6th lowest @ £46.9k. 5th lowest on per pupil basis </div> <div> 10 Locality Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Premises and occupation both 3rd highest on per pupil basis Supplies and services highest </div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low occupation cost reflects the school's prudence on use of water, energy etc Difficult to compare with locality schools due to differing sizes. Economies of scale a key factor for these metrics.
School improvement plan priorities and the relative cost of options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are school improvement initiatives prioritised, costed and linked to the budget? Are all new initiatives fully costed before your school is committed to the proposal? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAIP includes resources required and cost implications Allowance made in annual budget.
List of contracts with costs and renewal dates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are all contracts due for renewal re-tendered/reviewed for VFM before renewal? Are there any regular payments for services that are an invoice-only contract? Include all goods and services on a contracts list, including single-item and routine purchases, such as stationery. Check all suppliers are on contracts list and review the overall list for VFM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFVS and best value statement. Above discussed as part of budget planning meetings. Considerations: Software licences, SLA renewals
Other finance notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-year balance shows £4,156 for WP. 5 schools had a higher in-year balance, 3 had a lower in-year balance and 6 showed a deficit WP has the lowest revenue reserve @ £28.3k Some schools might have money allocated to capital projects 	

