Finance

Suggested Questions

Financial strategy:

• Is there a sound financial strategy for the school?

• Do governors have a good understanding of the school budget and how this is calculated?

• Is the school making efficient use of the financial resources available?

• Is the school achieving value for money? How is this evidenced?

• Are there any areas of spending where better value for money could be achieved?

• Is spending allocated with reference to the school’s improvement priorities?

• Are there any areas where the budget is overspent? Why is this and what can be done?

• If the school budget is in deficit, are governors fully aware of the reasons why? Is there a plan in place to rectify this?

• Has the school produced a budget forecast for the next three years?

• Has the school taken into account any cost rises that are likely to occur over the next couple of years?

• Has the school budget taken into account any changes in pupil numbers that are projected over the coming years?

• Is there a plan in place for any specific funding types (sports premium, pupil premium, catch up finding, etc.)? Can the impact of this funding be evidenced?

• Is IT technology up to date? Is there a strategy to keep equipment updated as technology advances?

• If the school has any reserves, what is the reason for this? Is there a plan for how these will be spent in the future?

**Income generation:**

• Has the school explored other potential income streams (e.g. grants, hire of premises)?

• Does the school have a charging and remissions policy and is this being applied consistently?

**Monitoring, benchmarking and reporting:**

• Is there a finance committee on the governing body? Are there clear terms of reference for this committee?

• Do governors have the required financial skills to monitor school finances effectively? If not, how is this being addressed?

• Are all financial reporting requirements being complied with?

• Has the school taken part in annual benchmarking activities? If so, what has been learnt from this?

• Are relevant governors fully involved in audit procedures?

• How often do governors receive reports about spending across different departments and are they getting enough information to determine whether this is effective?

• Are the outcomes from audits acted upon appropriately?

**Procurement:**

• Is there an effective system for procurement and is this being applied consistently?

• What procedures are in place for detecting fraud?

• Has the school considered ways that spending could be reduced through partnerships, federations or collaborations (e.g. by sharing services with another school)?

• What contracts has the school entered into and how often are these reviewed?

• Are there any financial conflicts of interest and how is the school ensuring that these have not impacted on spending decisions?

**Local authority schools:**

• Is the School’s Financial Value Standard (SFVS) and Assurance Statement discussed regularly at governors’ meetings (or finance committee meetings)?

• Are governors aware of the outcome of the SFVS?

• Has an action plan been put into place to address any issues highlighted by the SFVS?