

6.7 BENCHMARKING

Introduction

Benchmarking can be used to identify significant differences in the way schools manage their resources. Through comparison with other schools' spending and patterns of service, schools can determine whether there is scope for doing things better: improving efficiency, reducing costs or identifying the potential scope for savings.

Financial benchmarking in schools is about more than just effectively managing the budget. It is about achieving value for money so that resources are applied to best effect. This means more than just picking the cheapest option.

Financial benchmarking can help schools to challenge the way they do things. Better use of finite resources can have a direct impact on educational outcomes. The role of headteachers and school business managers is crucial. They can encourage other schools to use the Schools Financial Benchmarking website. They can also involve front-line managers and staff in seeking out and implementing change. With strong leadership and support, schools can achieve measurably good outcomes from benchmarking their expenditure.

National DfE Benchmarking

All local authority (LA) maintained schools are required to submit Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) returns.

CFR is the national framework for maintained schools income and expenditure items and balances. It was developed by the Department, in partnership with the Audit Commission and Ofsted, and is the main source of information on how maintained schools spend their resources.

The [Schools Financial Benchmarking](#) website is available to help schools in self-management and improving efficiency through financial benchmarking. There are over 20,000 school records available on the site to enable financial comparisons and to help schools to challenge how they spend money.

Full details of how to use the data and obtain reports which can be presented to governors and other audiences is provided in the DfE website.

Local LB Barnet Benchmarking

For a number of years the Schools Accountancy has used the CFR data for all Barnet maintained schools to enable schools to make comparisons with other local schools. This has had the advantages of knowing that the schools are all receiving delegated funds on the same basis and with some knowledge of their pupils and environment.

The LB Barnet benchmarking data will enable you to compare key areas of income and expenditure on a meaningful basis with other similar schools in Barnet.

The Benchmarking can be found on the Barnet Funding & Finance website –

[Local benchmarking Information - Working with children in Barnet](#)

