

# Chief Education Officer's Report to Governors



## AUTUMN TERM (1) 2006

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*DEVELOPING THE  
EFFECTIVENESS OF  
YOUR GOVERNING BODY*

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Putting the Community First



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**Summary**

The **Barnet's Early Years and Childcare Plan 2006 - 2008** outlines our vision for integrated early years services and action plan for the implementation of the Government's **Choice for parents, the best start for children: a ten year strategy for childcare (2004)** and the proposed roll out of **children's centres** across Barnet.

**The Barnet Vision for Integrated Early Years Services** has been produced in consultation with local Early Years practitioners and endorsed by Barnet Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board (27 October 2005).

- We recognise that families are the primary carers and educators of their children. Early Years services must enhance and support parents and carers and promote personal and family independence wherever possible.
- We will ensure that all families have access to support, information and advice to enable them to help their children reach their full potential.
- We believe that children's early experiences make a positive contribution to their future learning, enabling them to develop their full potential as future citizens in the twenty-first century.
- We are committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to experience high quality Early Years services that are integrated, locally based, inclusive, accessible to all and flexible to meet the needs of all children and their families.

The **Plan** identifies 6 key objectives to which we will be working over the next 2 years.

1. Ensure every child gets the best possible start in life by the provision of high quality integrated early education and childcare services.
2. Maximise parents' choice in how they balance their work and family commitments by providing accessible and flexible childcare services that will meet their individual needs.
3. Have a children's centre in every community offering a range of information and integrated services according to local need, including early education and childcare, health services and family and parenting support.
4. Ensure parents have access to information and advice about locally available childcare and other support services; this includes information about the quality of childcare, including inspection results.

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5. Increase the free early education entitlement for three and four year olds from 12 ½ hours to 15 hours per week by 2010.
  6. Maximise the involvement of local parents and partner organisations in the planning and delivery of local early years and childcare services.

## **Children's Centres**

We are developing a programme of integrated childcare and education across the borough through children's centres targeting the most disadvantaged children and families.

Barnet will have two children's centres in 2006:

- Wingfield Sure Start Children's Centre in Grahame Park (April 2006)
- Parkfield Sure Start Children's Centre at Parkfield Primary school in West Hendon (September 2006)

Barnet has a challenging target to deliver a further 15 Children's Centres by 2008.

- Children's centres are expected to target children and families living in areas of disadvantage
- Our (and the national) preferred model will see children's centres linked to, or integrated into local primary schools and we have linked the development of children's centres with the primary schools building programme and extended services in and around schools
- We have identified existing early years settings that are already offering some of the children's centre core offer that can become centres.

We will continue to work in partnership with community, voluntary and private sector partners to provide integrated childcare and education for all children and their families.

No two centres will look the same or offer identical services; children's centres will provide all or some of the following services based on local need.

- Early Years education and childcare
- Information and advice
- Child and family health services
- Family support and outreach

A copy of the **Plan** will be sent to all schools and governing bodies and will be available on the Barnet Grid for Learning website.

**Governors' Role** To note the above information

**For  
consideration /  
action by**

- All Governors

**Contact/  
Information**

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**Summary**

The DfES consulted with schools and governors during the latter part of the summer term 2006 over proposals to alter the arrangements for the performance management (PM) of teachers and headteachers. That consultation, extended to close on 30 August, could be found at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations>

The proposals that are the subject of consultation included the following points. It has to be stressed that these may change as a result of the consultation.

**Some key issues for consideration and action**

- In order to commence the new cycle of performance management, planning meetings between teachers and their performance manager must be completed by 31 October\*.
- These planning meetings should record a clear process for providing CPD, monitoring, feedback and success criteria related to targeted outcomes for the individual concerned.
- Targets will not have to fit into prescribed categories as is currently the case. However, the draft regulations make it clear that, “The reviewee’s objectives shall be such that, if they are achieved, they will contribute to improving the progress of the pupils he teaches.”
- In gathering evidence of progress towards targets, lesson observation, specifically for the purpose of PM, must not exceed 3 hours in a single PM cycle.
- The reviewer’s statement summarising the teacher’s review should contain a recommendation of salary progression if the teacher is eligible for such a pay increase and the judgement on their overall performance warrants it.
- The headteacher must pay regard to this salary recommendation as a consideration in setting the salary level for the teacher.
- Governors need to review their PM policy in the light of the new regulations from September and publish their revised policy statement, having consulted with staff and unions.

Barnet will be contacting schools early in the autumn term with details of the PM workshops that will be offered to headteachers and governors. These are likely to be on 10 and 11 October, by which point the outcome of the consultation should be known.

\* There was a strong indication when going to press that this date would be put back to 31 January 2007.

**Governors’ Role** To note the above information

**For  
consideration by**

- All Governors

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Information**

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**Summary**

The Financial Management Standard & Toolkit (FMS&T) was developed and released to schools as a self-management package in June 2004. The Standard itself is a simple statement of what a school that is financially well managed would look like. A summary is provided as **Appendix A**. It provides a clear and consistent benchmark that schools can use to encourage self-improvement. The Standard is intended to cover standards and processes that should already be in place in schools, rather than to introduce a new, higher standard.

Effective financial management in schools is essential so that they can make the most of their resources, demonstrating value for money; exercise proper controls over the significant amounts of public money delegated to them and allocate resources effectively to meet school priorities for development and improvement. The Standard is intended to help schools, including the Governing Body in evaluating the quality of their financial management and to aid in training staff to become better financial managers.

On 21 July 2005, the Government announced its expectation that all secondary schools should have met the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) by March 2007. There is a requirement for the Chief Finance Officer to sign a declaration attached to the Section 52 Outturn statement, to the effect that relevant schools either meet the FMSiS or are subject to appropriate action to ensure they meet FMSiS.

The DfES are proposing to assist local authorities to ensure compliance by making achievement of the Standard a requirement of the Scheme for Financing Schools and also to allow a local authority to declare the external assessment of compliance to be compulsory for some or all of their secondary schools.

Whilst the Standard is not at a higher level than existing good practice, it contains two new aspects – a Controls Assurance Statement and a staff competency matrix. Governors are expected to be involved in the school's self evaluation and will have to approve the school's Controls Assurance Statement annually.

The process of accreditation is that each school completes a self-evaluation which it submits together with evidence. In Barnet the evaluation is being carried out by Internal Audit. Schools meeting the Standard receive a certificate from the DfES. Schools need to apply for re accreditation every three years.

The timetable of implementation in Barnet is –

- Secondary schools notified of requirement to meet Standard – April 2006
- Seminar for school staff to launch FMSiS – 3 July 2006
- Secondary school Governors briefing – 13 July 2006 & 18 Sept 2006
- Secondary schools to undertake self assessment – Sept/Oct 2006
- Secondary schools workshop (TBA)

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- Submission of self assessment + evidence portfolio – by 31 October 2006
  - Internal Audit assessment of submission – Nov 2006 – Feb 2007
  - Successful schools (and DfES) notified – March 2007
  - Unsuccessful schools notified with request to prepare Action Plan.

Future developments are

- Expected roll out to all schools by March 2010
- Development of FMS and Toolkit website by DfES with future annual updates
- Barnet Financial Guide for Schools to be revised in light of national FMS
- Future Barnet training sessions for school staff and Governors to take account of FMS and Competencies

**Governors' Role** At least one member of the school's Finance Committee is expected to be involved in the school's self assessment.

The full Governing Body is required to agree the school's Self assessment for submission to the LA and the annual Controls Assurance Statement.

**For consideration by**

- All Governors

**Contact/ Information** To obtain advice/guidance on financial management standards please contact your school's Finance Support Officer (where this service is bought in) or

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**Summary**

The total school balances for the authority's 116 schools are approximately £11.5m, of which £9.3m is revenue and £2.2m is capital. The revenue balances per sector and as a percentage of the School Budget Share are as follows -

Nursery	£296,970	20%
Primary	£5,926,975	8%
Secondary	£2,837,038	4%
Special	£246,123	5%
Total	£9,307,106	6%

Compared to balances as at 31 March 2005, revenue balances have decreased by £122k and capital balances have increased by £599k, giving a small net increase of £477k. This overall position hides a decrease in revenue balances in secondary and special school sectors whilst there has been an increase in the nursery and primary school sectors.

The range of balances as a percentage of the School Budget Share are:

Nursery schools	15 – 26%
Primary schools	0 – 24%
Secondary schools	0 – 11%
Special schools	2 – 10%

Four Primary and three Secondary schools had deficits and have plans in place to recover the deficit.

Some schools have significant balances whilst saving for an identified one off project usually a capital development to improve the facilities. Some schools have had high balances for several years either because of a delay in implementing plans or implementation is carried out whilst a further balance arises.

Schools are required to submit an annual budget (DP11) and a statement about their Planned Use of Balances (DP12). From 2005/06 schools have been required to prepare two forecasts of their outturn position, as at end of September and December, in an effort to ensure Headteachers and Governors are aware of potential balances. Also in 2005/06 a spreadsheet to assist in preparing a 3 Year Financial Plan was made available to schools and was required to be used for those preparing a Recovery Plan.

As previously, all schools with revenue balances over 5% of their Budget Share have been asked to provide details of their planned use (on the form DP12). In addition, nursery, primary and special schools with balances of 15% and over and secondary schools with balances of 10% and over, have been asked to provide a statement of the cost and date of implementation of their plans. The

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school should also report on the implementation position at months 6 and 9, during 2006/07.

The DfES has consulted LAs about changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools. This concerns schools preparing multi-year budgets and LAs being empowered to recover “surplus” balances above a certain level that are not assigned to specific uses. The consultation suggested that a reasonable level of uncommitted balances would be 5% for secondary schools and 8% for other sectors. It is likely that such provisions will be included in the Scheme this autumn.

**Governors’ Role** To ensure that the school’s annual and three year Budget Plans are related to the School Improvement Plan and that the school has a costed plan with a timetable for the use of the school’s balance above a reasonable contingency.

**For consideration by**

- All Governors

**Contact/ Information** To obtain advice/guidance on school financial planning and balances please contact

Your school’s Finance Support Officer (where this service is bought in) or

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## DfES Financial Management Standard – Summary

The essential items for achieving the Standard are as follows:-

### 1. Leadership and Governance

- 1.1 The staff and governors have a shared understanding of their own financial management roles and responsibilities and those of others
- 1.2 School governance arrangements ensure that Governors are able to fulfil their financial management roles and responsibilities properly
- 1.3 The Headteacher and Bursar (if in post) operate with financial integrity setting an example to governors and staff alike
- 1.4 The Governing Body has considered, signed and published a controls assurance confirming that resources have been properly managed
- 1.5 The School has effective governance arrangements covering issues which include conflicts of interest and whistle blowing

### 2. People Management

- 2.1 The Governing Body includes individuals who are able to:
  - Be an effective “critical friend” on financial management issues
  - Provide strategic leadership on financial management issues
  - Ensure financial management accountability
- 2.2 The staff with financial management responsibilities include individuals who are organised in a way that enables them to:
  - Provide a strategic view
  - Ensure accountability requirements are met
  - Facilitate the effective operation of financial processes

### 3. Policy and Strategy

- 3.1 The school has an annual budget that:
  - Is realistic and affordable in relation to available resources and cash flows
  - Is approved by Governors on a timely basis
  - Reflects the school development plan
  - Is consistent with any longer term financial plans for recovering deficits or saving up for future developments
- 3.2 The governors and the staff have compared the School’s financial performance with that of similar schools, examined reasons for differences and taken action where necessary

### 4. Partnerships and Resources

- 4.1 The Local Authority (LA) and the school have agreed their respective financial management roles and responsibilities
- 4.2 The school has procurement arrangements in place to secure value for money from all suppliers including the LA and outside contractors

### 5. Processes

- 5.1 The financial management information provided to governors and staff meets their needs by being:
  - Relevant
  - Accurate
  - Timely
  - User friendly
- 5.2 The school provides the LA with accurate and up to date information in accordance with the LA’s needs
- 5.3 The school complies with Consistent Financial Reporting requirements on a timely basis
- 5.4 The school has up to date, documented and approved financial regulations that are implemented consistently

5.5 The school has up to date, documented and approved detailed financial procedures that are, tailored to the school's need and implemented consistently in practice

5.6 The school maintains proper accounting records throughout the year

5.7 The Governors and staff have evidence that there is effective control over:

Financial management system, Income received, Payroll, Purchasing, the banking system, Petty cash holdings and payments, Taxation system, Voluntary funds, the School's assets