



REPORT REFERENCE:- **3.0**

REGULATORY AND OTHER COMMITTEE REPORT

NAME OF COMMITTEE:	Schools' Forum
DATE OF MEETING:	27 January 2010
SUBJECT:	2009/10 Section 52 benchmarking
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IS REPORT EXEMPT?	No

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to share with the Schools' Forum the latest s.52 benchmarking data published by the DCSF. This information is traditionally reported to the Schools Forum in the autumn, but the latest data was not published in time to report to the October meeting.

DISCUSSION

All LAs are required to publish prior to the start of the financial year, a statement showing the authority's planned expenditure on Children's services. Since 2003/04, the DCSF has used that information to publish benchmarking tables of planned expenditure and details are presented to the Schools Forum each year. The tables are intended to give detailed information of each



Local Authority's (LA) planned expenditure in a form which allows benchmarking by Schools Forums and LAs.

The benchmarking information is published at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/financeandfunding/informationforlocalauthorities/section52/benchmarking0910/benchmarking0910/>

Although this information is very useful, it must be recognised that differences can arise because of LAs' varying approaches to: delegation; the interpretation of the DCSF' s52 guidance, and; the methodology used for apportioning corporate overheads, etc. It is also important to note that the 'per pupil' figures shown in the report are calculated using the planned spending and the total school population. It does not therefore take account of specific cohorts, such as the actual number of early years children, the actual number of children placed in independent settings, or the number of children actually transported to and from school, etc.

Direct comparisons with previous years are difficult because there are often alterations to the content of the s.52 budget statement and that in turn increases the risk of LAs classifying expenditure differently on the s.52 statement. Furthermore, for 2009/10, the number of LAs classified as 'upper tier' has reduced to 27.

A copy of Table 1 of s.52 is attached at Appendix 1. The most notable comparators are set out below:

Col	Description / Comment	Lincs £ per pupil	Upper Tier median £ per pupil	Ranking out of 27	English mean £ per pupil
9	ISB including SSG, SSG(P), SDG, etc <i>This essentially reflects the funds available directly to schools.</i>	3,380	3,519	25 th	3,776
10	Early Years <i>This provides funding for private, voluntary and independent providers.</i>	124	126	15 th	101
16	Fees for independent special schools <i>The LA's lower than average cost is, in part, due to the building of four EBD schools several years ago.</i>	59	69	18 th	82
25	PRUs / Behaviour support / Education Otherwise <i>This is significantly below similar LAs.</i>	48	75	21 st =	84
26	14-16 More Practical Learning options <i>This highlights LCC's success in developing provision and securing DCSF' funding.</i>	10	6	9 th =	7
41	Termination of Employment costs <i>In January 2009, the Schools Forum supported an increase in this budget.</i>	12	2	2 nd =	3
48	Capital Expenditure from the Revenue Account <i>This reflects the continued significant investment by LCC in the schools' capital programme.</i>	61	24	4 th	21



50	Total Schools Budget¹ <i>This is £149 per pupil below similar LAs. For c.99,000 children in Lincolnshire, this represents c.£15m.</i>	3,899	4,048	25th	4,292
59	Home to School transport – SEN <i>Considerable effort is being made to reduce these costs.</i>	99	62	3 rd	73
60	Home to School Transport – Other <i>Actual spend will be a little lower than originally planned, but spending remains comparatively high. The £80 differential equates to c.£8m and so is a very significant sum. Rurality is, of course, a key factor.</i>	168	88	2 nd	55
62	Home to College Transport – Other <i>LCC introduced charges for post-16 transport three years ago.</i>	21	4	2 nd	4
64	School Improvement	51	51	14 ^{th=}	64
75	Youth Work	28	30	15 th	34
77	Connexions	41	37	2 ^{nd=}	34
86	Residential care	50	56	19 th	77
87	Foster care <i>This is notably below the average for similar LAs.</i>	51	67	23 ^{rd=}	99
123	Commissioning and Social Work	91	93	16 th	123
126	Statutory and Regulatory duties <i>The increase in costs over recent years is largely attributable to an increase in corporate costs and the methodology used to apportion those both to Children's Services and across the s52 statement.</i>	97	50	2 nd	54
142	Grand total	4,832	4,865	16th	5,253

Further comparisons can be made by referring to Appendix 1.

In summary, compared to the Upper Tier authorities, the funding available directly to schools is relatively low (Column 9: 25th and £139 per pupil lower than the median). That is then reflected in the Total Schools Budget which is also low (Column 50: 25th and £149 per pupil lower than the median). Finally, the grand total of spending per pupil on Children's Services is £33 per pupil lower than the median but, as reported in previous years, significantly more of Lincolnshire's spending is used to finance home to school transport costs, thereby leaving less resource available to support other services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Schools' Forum is asked to note the contents of the report.

¹ The budget lines up to this point reflect expenditure financed by the DSG (and LSC funding of sixth forms). The remaining lines are financed directly by LCC budgets and together demonstrate total planned spending on Children's Services.



APPENDICES - these are listed below and attached at the back of the report.

Appendix 1

2009/10 Section 52 benchmarking data for Upper Tier Authorities (Table 1)