

Governors empowered to make best use of primary school funds

School Profile

Name
Ivydale Primary School

School Category
Maintained

School type
Primary

Pupil roll
500

Age range of pupils
3 to 11

LA
Southwark, London

“SBS consultancy support was exactly what Ivydale needed! Our consultant is always calm and unflappable, and nothing is ever too much trouble. The consultant’s approach enables school staff to remain in control of the school’s finances. The SBS Service Desk has been available to offer immediate support and advice between the consultant’s monthly visits by email and phone.”

Helen Ingham
Headteacher

Ivydale Primary School and Children’s Centre is one of the best kept secrets in Southwark – it is exciting, creative and dynamic and is very much at the heart of the local community

Through art, music, sport and community events, the school takes every opportunity to continue a tradition of family and neighbourhood participation.

Dedicated and passionate staff at Ivydale School work hard to ensure that all children are given every opportunity to become successful, confident and happy learners so that they will look back on their years at the school with pride and a sense of achievement, wherever their talents lie. The number of children at Ivydale achieving the expected level 4 or above in both English and Maths is above both Southwark’s and the national average. The staff are very proud to have their own Children’s Centre, which provides services, support and activities for families in the local community.

The school’s objectives

Helen Ingham, Ivydale’s Headteacher commented: “Our school was not receiving an adequate service from its previous financial provider and as a new Headteacher with limited budgeting experience, it was essential that I received the financial advice and support that would better meet my needs and also those of our governors.”

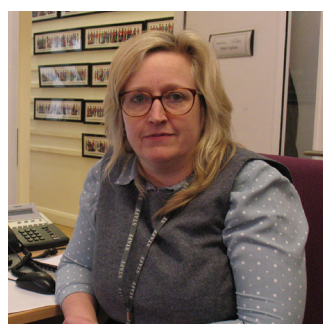


How SBS services helped

The SBS consultant has built excellent working relationships with the leadership team and administrative staff, and works closely with them to produce effective and timely financial reports and returns to the local authority. The consultant conducts regular and comprehensive health checks of the finance system, provides suggestions for improved accounting and budgeting processes, delivers on-the-job training for office staff and the headteacher, and submits accurate and timely bespoke reports to governors.

Governors now have the level of information that they need to fulfil their role in relation to the financial governance of the school. The SBS consultant is knowledgeable about developments in education finance and shares good practice gained by experience. Helen added: “As Headteacher, I am now confident about long-term school development and financial planning, and in achieving better value from the financial resources provided to the school to the benefit of our pupils and to the clients of our Children’s Centre.”

School administrative staff have also attended Finance and Business training provided by the SBS team, including financial system and benchmarking courses. Training delivery was excellent and has increased the capacity of the school leadership team and other staff to focus on improving efficiency and the management of the schools, and the Childrens Centres annual budgets.



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Helen Ingham
Headteacher

Use of the SBS Online budget planning and monitoring software has provided confidence to the Headteacher and added assurance to governors. The business planning tool has opened opportunities to explore the financial viability of different options for moving forward, especially as the school is expanding both in relation to its pupil numbers and the recent widening of its Children’s Centre role.

The impact

Helen observed: “From my perspective as Headteacher, I have greater assurance that our financial systems are well managed. Accounting is more accurate and the knowledge and understanding of relevant school staff have improved. I can plan with more confidence and be certain that issues are brought to my attention immediately so that I am fully aware at all times of the school’s financial position in the current year and for moving forward.

“Our governors have acknowledged the improved financial reporting from the school and the ability to identify and make decisions about improving value for money in the use of the funds assigned to the school, and capacity to take on future projects or make changes to our staffing structure. Using SBS Online allows me to have instant access to both strategic and focused financial data, and to identify the impact of any proposals and decisions on our long term financial position.”

Next steps

Ivydale anticipates that there will be continued increase in staff financial knowledge and understanding, so that there is capacity to manage a greater amount of the financial procedures in-house, with continued strategic support from SBS.

To find out more about Finance services, contact the SBS team on 0345 222 1551 or email sales@schoolbusinessservices.co.uk

www.schoolbusinessservices.co.uk