



Educational & Financial Consultancy
www.schoolassessor.com



About us

Educational and Financial Consulting is a division of a successful Managing Consultancy Practice formed in 1994 which is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales Practice Assurance Scheme. All assessments are carried out from our Maidstone practice and every case is overseen by a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

As assessors we are looking for an evidential trail that allows us to say that from the evidence supplied, the school has met the department for children, schools and families' Financial Management Standard in Schools.

We visit every school as we do not believe in the value of remote desktop reviews. Because we are on site, if something is missing in the evidential trail, we can point to other ways of presenting evidence, documents or files to ensure the evidential trail is as complete as possible on the day. The assessment should be carried out with minimal disruption to the School.

As a practice we not "do late"! We look to make third party enquiries (e.g. the LA) in advance so that we are able to advise the school within 7-10 working days that they have successfully met the Standard or that they have a twenty day window to provide fuller and better information.

At the end of the assessment, we leave with you a simple form for you to say what you thought of the Assessor and how we carried out the assessment. Your comments are filed on a database to be available to the department of children, schools and families when we get inspected.

What makes us different?

Unlike many external assessors we do not only assess groups of schools who band together for the assessment. Each school is treated by us as an individual school and is "our client". We are aware and mindful that a lot of hard work has been undertaken prior to our arrival and that most of the burden for this will have fallen on the school Business Manager/Bursar/Finance Officer. We recognise that no two schools are the same. They differ in size, status and resources. Our assessment recognises the schools individuality and adapts to their available resources.

It is our view that "however well you are doing you can always find a way to improve"! –if this wasn't true, Management Consultancy would be a past industry. Parallel to the assessment we want to add value where possible and give input regarding best practice and better efficiency if there are any areas where this is appropriate.

Our objective is to have the School (our client) consider the job we have done has been a caring one, useful to the school, not too disruptive and that all concerned at the School consider us as their first choice when the process of assessment needs to be revisited in three years time.

Hand holding

The School may not understand what assessment for FMSiS is all about. Imagine a jigsaw puzzle with no picture to work to. Not an easy task!

The Standard is the same whether or not the school has 100 or 1600 pupils but the difference is the resources available to prepare the evidential trail.

Many Primary and Junior schools and more particularly Special schools may not have the resources for preparation of the evidential trail unassisted.

We have developed a “hand holding service” where we attend the school prior to assessment for a day (or however long is needed).

We guide the person responsible for producing the evidential trail and can meet with Governors and the Head Teacher as necessary.

Our hand holding, while directed to certain areas prior to assessment, is there throughout the assessment process. We will not treat you as an item on a production line. We will recognise your individuality and because we treat you as our client, your needs are paramount.

Our standard is:

- A caring approach and attitude by the assessor.
- Identifying exactly where the school (our client) sits in resources and skills to deal with assessment and flex our approach to mesh with the school's needs.
- Best practice.
- Sensitivity to the Governors and others involved in the assessment.
- Hand holding if necessary.
- Added value by the Assessor

FAQ's

What is FMSiS? It is the department for children, schools and families' Financial Management Standard in Schools – what a financially well managed school should look like.

Why do I have to be assessed? Because there is a legal requirement under Section 48 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Whose responsibility is it to prepare for assessment? There is tripartite responsibility between the Head Teacher, Governors and the school Business Manager/Bursar.

What is the benefit to the school? Completing the assessment tool will help you achieve long term improvements in Financial Management. You will receive the FMSiS kite mark so that the outside world, in particular parents and the LA, can see the School has reached the required Standard.

What is an external assessor? External assessors are on an approved list from the department of children, schools and families. Those who come from a Management Consultancy/ Chartered Accountancy background can be expected to contribute added value where appropriate.

What is assessment? Not an audit but assessment: the school demonstrates by an evidential trail that the Standard has been met. We carry out all assessments on site.

Why a twenty day window? Sometimes as the assessment progresses, the evidential trail has to be improved in one or more specific areas. It means some more work is needed and the twenty day window allows you achieve this prior to a final decision

What happens if the School does not meet the standard? This does sometimes happen and the assessor should highlight in his report what needs improving and make recommendations so that the School can build on where they are at. We can be asked by the school to give additional assistance to agree an action plan to meet the Standard and to help follow this through. When further work has been applied to the areas highlighted in the assessor's report, the School should apply to be re-assessed.

We have attained the standard: what happens now? The assessor will notify the department for children, schools and families, the Head Teacher and the LA that you have met the Standard for FMSiS. Within three years you will need to renew assessment to show you are continuing to meet the standard.

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