



LCC Schools Finance Handbook

Section M:

Consistent Financial
Reporting

November 2024

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SECTION M1: Consistent Financial Reporting

M1.1 Introduction

Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) is an annual return of financial data which aims to allow schools to benchmark expenditure and income. By comparing spending and consumption patterns of services, all schools will have the tools to promote self management and value for money. It also provides the opportunity to analyse specific areas of finance over time to help evaluate their direct impact on pupils' learning. CFR also reduces the number of demands made on schools to provide data and information.

M1.2 Data Submission

A CFR submission is required for all schools maintained by Local Authorities at the end of each financial year. LCC is best placed to provide the CFR data to the DfE.

M1.3 Benchmarking

During the Autumn Term the DfE will publish the CFR data on the Schools Financial Benchmarking website. This can be accessed here: [Schools Financial Benchmarking - GOV.UK \(schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk\)](https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk)

This website is designed to allow schools to compare their expenditure, income and staffing between schools of a similar size around the county. The website allows schools to analyse their own previous year costs and it helps them to open up dialogue with other schools regarding cost saving measures and staffing structure.

Benchmarking Guidance has previously been provided to schools and is reproduced in Appendix A.

APPENDIX A: Benchmarking Guidance

<https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/>

Schools financial benchmarking

Compare a school or trust's income and expenditure with similar establishments in England.

You can view your school or academy trust's financial data, see how it compares with others and use the information to establish relationships with other schools or multi-academy trusts.


[Find a school](#)[Find an academy trust](#)[Compare with no default school](#)

Search schools by:

☐ Name, URN or LAESTAB code

☐ Location

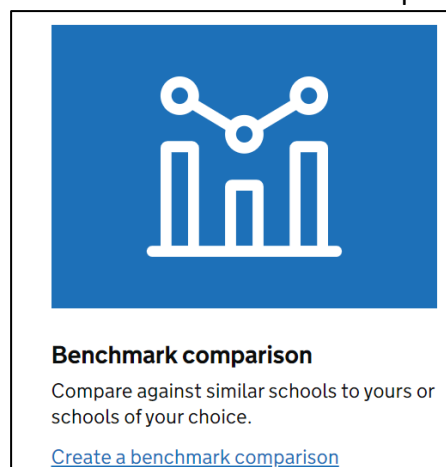
☐ Local authority

Select Name, URN or LAESTAB code. A box will appear. Type in the School Name or the DfE Number and click  to search.

Alternatively select Local Authority. You will be asked to enter the LEA name and then search. You will have a list of all schools in the LEA and can Add as many as you wish.

If you selected the School option you should then click on Start comparison.

Click Create a benchmark comparison:



Quick comparison will give you some pre-selected benchmarks:

- ☐ Quick comparison using pre-selected characteristics (number of pupils, school phase, urban/rural) ?
- ☐ Detailed comparison using characteristics you choose ?
- ☐ Manual comparison by name or location ?

Continue

Quick comparison 1 of 2

Which school type do you wish to compare with?

Comparing to **Lincoln Birchwood Junior School**

- ☐ Maintained schools
- ☐ Academies
- ☐ All schools

Continue

If selecting Maintained schools results in only a few schools showing in the list for comparison, choose All schools instead.

Find schools with a similar percentage of:

- ☒ Pupils eligible for free school meals
- ☒ Pupils with special educational needs who have statements or education and health care plans
- ☒ Pupils with English as an additional language

Location characteristic: ?

- ☒ Within the local authority (will produce fewer results if selected)

Number of schools in benchmark set: ?

- ☐ Define the number of schools in the benchmark comparison (default is 15)

Continue to benchmarking charts

Ensure all choices above are ticked.

You will now be shown the main screen with comparison for similar schools. The number show may vary from school to school.

The screenshot shows a web interface with a top navigation bar containing a link 'View characteristics used'. Below this is a row of icons and labels: 'Download data', 'Download page', 'Print page', and 'Save or share benchmark' with a help icon. A row of tabs follows: 'Expenditure' (selected), 'Income', 'Balance', 'Workforce', 'Your charts (0)', and a blue 'Comparison schools' button. At the bottom, there are two dropdown menus: 'Show grouping' with 'Total expenditure' selected, and 'Show value' with 'Absolute total' selected.

You can click on Expenditure / Income / Balance / Workforce and also select different options from the Show Grouping and Show Value drop down menus.

This screenshot is identical to the previous one, but the 'Show grouping' dropdown menu is now set to 'Occupation', which is highlighted with a yellow border. The 'Show value' dropdown remains at 'Per pupil'.

You can view the benchmark data either as Graphs or as Tables.

You can download the data in to Excel or download the page as a PDF or Powerpoint.

The screenshot shows a row of four buttons: 'Download data' (with a download icon), 'Download page' (with a document icon), 'Print page' (with a printer icon), and 'Save benchmark basket' (with a folder icon).

Download Data

To download data as a CSV file and convert to Excel see the guidance below:

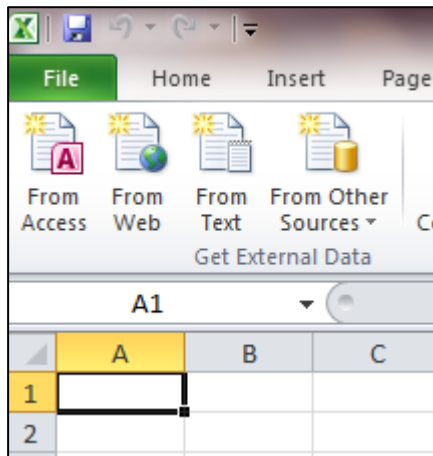
If you select Download data you will be asked if you wish to Open or Save.

Save to your desktop or Drive.

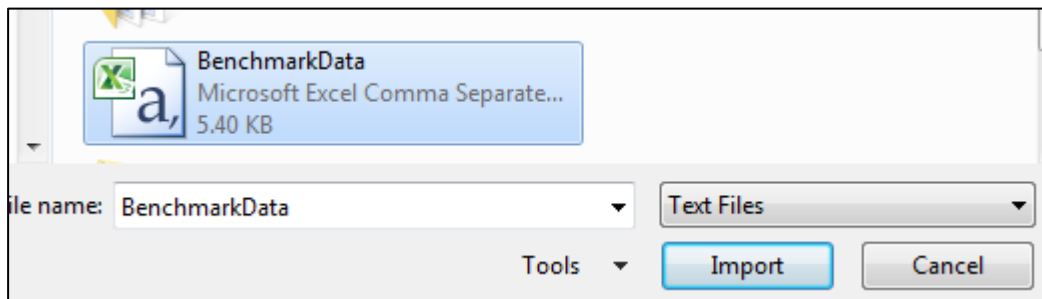
To view the data in Excel you will need to follow the following procedure.

Open Excel.

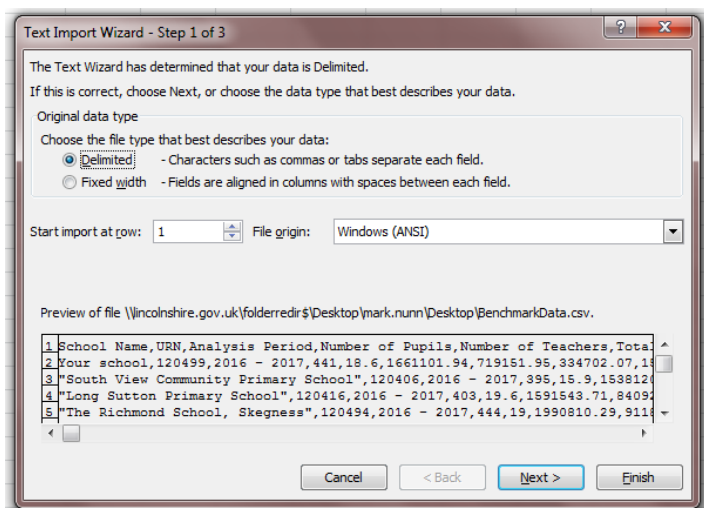
From a blank workbook select Data on the menu bar.



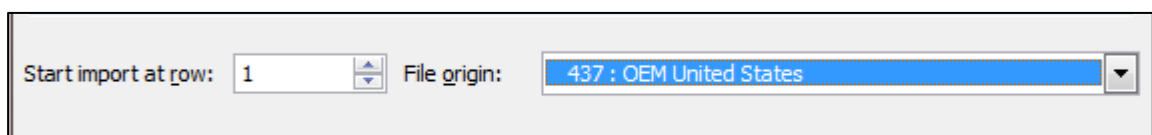
Select Get External Data – From Text.
Browse to the file you saved. Select the file and click on Import.



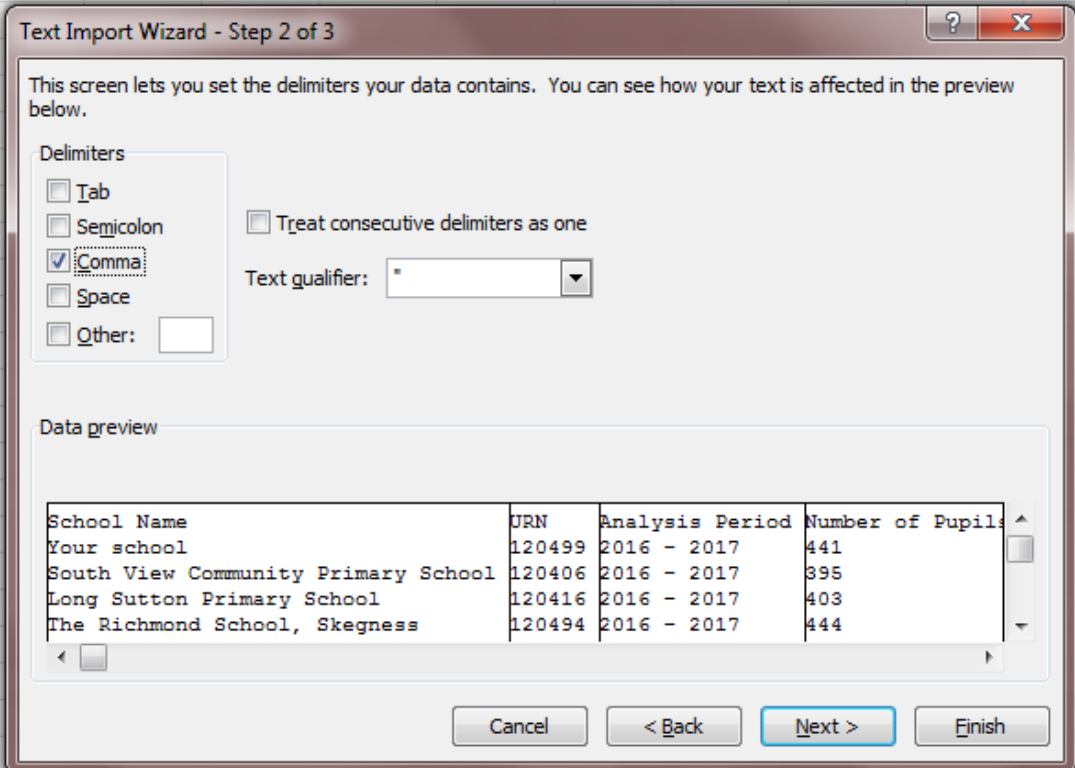
You will now enter the Wizard Screens. This should be what you see:



The Preview of file box will show how the data will be seen in Excel.
Where the File Origin says Windows (ANSI) use the arrow to select 437: OEM United States.
The choices are listed alphabetically ignoring the numbers.



Click Next. At the next screen untick Tab and tick Comma.



This screen lets you set the delimiters your data contains. You can see how your text is affected in the preview below.

Delimiters

☐ Tab
☐ Semicolon
☒ Comma
☐ Space
☐ Other:

☐ Treat consecutive delimiters as one

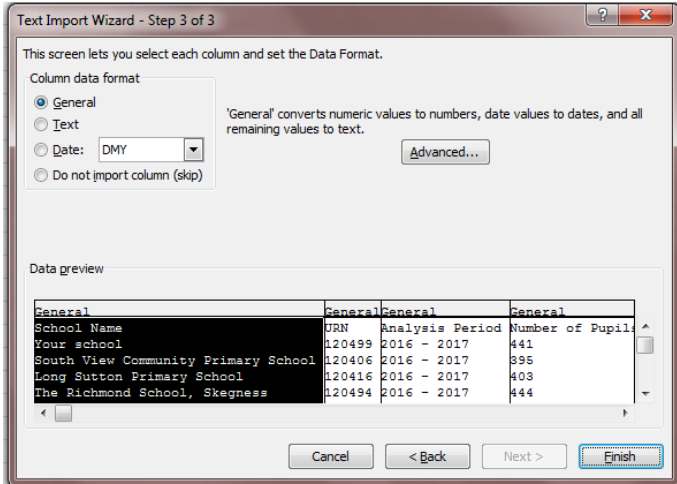
Text qualifier:

Data preview

School Name	URN	Analysis Period	Number of Pupils
Your school	120499	2016 - 2017	441
South View Community Primary School	120406	2016 - 2017	395
Long Sutton Primary School	120416	2016 - 2017	403
The Richmond School, Skegness	120494	2016 - 2017	444

Buttons: Cancel, < Back, Next >, Finish

In the data preview box you will see how the data will appear in Excel. Click Next. In the final screen do not change anything and click on Finish.



This screen lets you select each column and set the Data Format.

Column data format

☒ General
☐ Text
☐ Date: DMY
☐ Do not import column (skip)

'General' converts numeric values to numbers, date values to dates, and all remaining values to text.

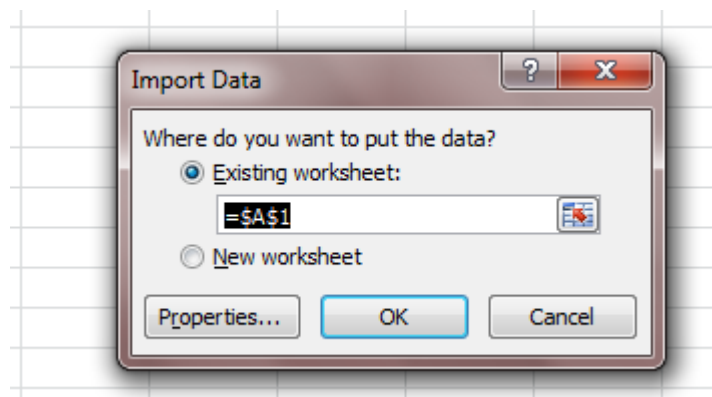
Advanced...

Data preview

General	General	General	General
School Name	URN	Analysis Period	Number of Pupils
Your school	120499	2016 - 2017	441
South View Community Primary School	120406	2016 - 2017	395
Long Sutton Primary School	120416	2016 - 2017	403
The Richmond School, Skegness	120494	2016 - 2017	444

Buttons: Cancel, < Back, Next >, Finish

You should now see this box in Excel.



Click on OK and the data will import into Excel.

The text data will now appear in your spreadsheet formatted as General and with Rows for each school in your selection and columns for data.

	B	C	D	E	F	
	URN	Analysis Period	Number of Pupils	Number of Teachers	Total expenditure	Tea
	120499	2016 - 2017	441	18.6	1661101.94	
Primary School	120406	2016 - 2017	395	15.9	1538120.68	
ool	120416	2016 - 2017	403	19.6	1591543.71	
egness	120494	2016 - 2017	444	19	1990810.29	
imary School	120504	2016 - 2017	376	17.4	1357950.49	
hool	132179	2016 - 2017	397.5	19.6	1616846.14	
y School	132251	2016 - 2017	402	18	1699229.54	

Download Page

To download the page as a PDF document or Powerpoint follow the guidance below:

Select Download page.

Select format required and click Download

Select file format

You can download the page's charts in PDF or PowerPoint format.

☒ PDF format

☐ PowerPoint format

[Download](#)
[Cancel](#)

Click open or save the document