

# Private service providers linked to increased funding for primary schools

By [Genevieve Allen](#)

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In January 2014, it was announced that the amended national norms and standards for school funding had been gazetted and implemented. The funding policy details how much government money each public school will receive - depending on their rankings.



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For the last 17 years, all public schools have been funded according to five categories or quintiles. Schools with the lowest quintile rankings received more funding and higher-ranked schools received less. With the new system, all schools that fell under quintiles 1 to 3 have become no-fee schools. What does this mean for quintile 5 schools that are not receiving increased grants for learners but still require funding to provide an excellent standard of education for their pupils?

The responsibility for financial management and positive cash flows rests with the School Governing Body (SGB). School fees and the government grants can only cover the basic expenses of running a school, such as teacher salaries, maintenance and the like. Parents, in turn, are constantly asked to contribute to fundraising initiatives. This leaves the school in a position where it is always begging for money.

One way in which schools can become more sustainable is to contract outsourced services. Firstly, this takes the burden and costs of managing these activities away from the school, giving it more time to get on with the business of teaching. Secondly, it gives the school an external revenue source. SGBs can see a direct benefit as the provider generally makes an arrangement that has the school earning a passive annuity-based income.

## Out-of-school-hours care

A practical example of this would be out-of-school-hours care. At the moment, aftercare is run on school premises with often many "off duty" teachers supervising the children - essentially a babysitting service that cuts into teachers' preparation and marking time. Most schools do not offer holiday care or before-school care, such as a breakfast club. Parents pay for the aftercare service, but children are rarely excited to attend aftercare as programmes are often not structured or stimulating. With a reputable and recognised independent provider in place, aftercare can now become something that is fun and engaging for the learners, while assisting the school to provide an excellent service to parents. Additionally, holiday care and before school care can be offered. When these services are run in an exciting, structured manner, more parents would likely use the service. This exponentially increases the revenue factor for the school.

A service of this nature would operate on school premises, so the duty of care would remain with the school, thereby adhering to contracts that the schools have with parents. The children do not need to be transported to a separate venue; they remain in a familiar environment. The provider bases the curriculum for the activities on the school's themes and ethos, extending the holistic learning experience.

Contracting private suppliers to manage supplementary school activities and services is one way in which SGBs can alleviate the pressure for funding as well as create a more exciting environment for the learners. SGBs are accountable to the school community and work with dedication and commitment to create the conditions to achieve quality learning and teaching in all our schools. They should be supported in their efforts towards this end.

## ABOUT GENEVIEVE ALLEN

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