

# Eastover Primary School

## Benchmarking Report



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## INTRODUCTION

Benchmarking allows schools to compare their financial performance with that of other schools of a similar size and who have similar characteristics and challenges. Areas that schools often compare are their income, expenditure, balance, and workforce. The Department for Education (DFE), in conjunction with the Audit Commission and Ofsted, developed the Schools Financial Benchmarking Website as a tool for comparison of schools' financial data. It is the main source of information on how maintained schools spend their resources.

The website is based on financial data from the annual Consistent Financial Reporting return (CFR) submitted by all maintained schools in England, which is then uploaded onto the Benchmarking website. The Consistent Financial Reporting framework sets out how you should go about coding your income and expenditure into nationally comparable categories to support financial reporting and Benchmarking. This enables simple reports to be produced for governors and Local Authorities.

The Schools' Financial Value Standard (SFVS) changed from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

**Section E Value for Money. Question 17:** *'Does the school Benchmark its income and expenditure annually against that of similar schools and investigate further where any category appears to be out of line?'*, refers to benchmarking and both the Schools Financial Benchmarking Website and the schools' spending data tables are useful tools for providing evidence for this question.

## HOW TO BENCHMARK YOUR SCHOOL'S FINANCIAL DATA

First, for financial benchmarking to be most effective, make sure you are comparing against schools that are in either the same geographical area as you, are a similar size (in terms of staff and students), have a similar demographic cohort of students (e.g., proportion of FSM, Pupil Premium and EAL), as well as student attainment. This level of comparison gives you the best chance of learning from how these schools are managing their finances.

Second, when you look at your data, bear in mind some key questions:

- If your expenditure differs compared to other schools, in what areas?
- In what other areas do you differ that could account for this difference?
- Is there a similar trend year on year? If not, why not?

What does the comparison tell you about your differences in approach or spending priorities?

What can you learn from other schools' approaches?

The DFE's [schools financial benchmarking service](#) compares the spending, staffing structures and performance of all schools in England each year. You can identify schools like you, then reach out to them for advice via their websites.

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## HOW SHOULD YOU USE YOUR DATA?

Once you have investigated your Benchmarking data, you should evaluate how this data will help you make the best budgeting decisions, to consider how to use your resources to support high-quality teaching and the best education outcomes for your pupils.

Benchmarking helps you to connect with other schools to discuss challenges and successes. This can help you consider whether:

- your resource allocations are working for you.
- you can improve outcomes by doing things differently.

Your Governors will be interested to know how and why your financial approach differs to similar schools, and how you plan to redirect your resources to support better outcomes for students.

Remember Benchmarking is only a guide. Some schools may find themselves at the lower or upper extremes of the data. You should consider local knowledge about your school when assessing the data.

## DATA SET USED FOR ANALYSIS

The comparison is based on characteristics of maintained Primary Schools with pupil numbers 391-443, eligible free school meals 25%-32% and Pupils with SEN 11%-25%. The following schools are included in the benchmarking charts plus 1 x Local school that is most similar to our school. Note: London schools are excluded from comparison

School Name	Location	Number on roll	Pupils with SEN	Pupils with FSM
Eastover Primary School	Bridgwater, TA6 5EX	407	21.1%	28%
St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School	Liverpool, L32 0TP	394	19.6%	28.3%
St Michael's Primary School	Reading, RG30 4AS	394	21.3%	31.7%
Bowburn Primary School	Bowburn, DH6 5FP	395	19.4%	28%
St Barnabas CofE Primary School	Worcester, WR3 8NZ	398	20.9%	25.1%
Cheriton Primary School	Folkestone, CT20 3EP	404	24.5%	28%
St Stephen's Church of England Primary School	Blackburn, BB1 5PE	400	20.5%	26%
Earl Spencer Primary School	Northampton, NN5 7DE	391	20.7%	27.4%
Somerset Bridge Primary School	Bridgwater, TA6 6AH	413	17.9%	28.6%

St Mary's VCCE Primary School	Bridgwater, TA6 7LX	443	10.9%	7.1%
Fynamore Primary School	Calne, SN11 9UG	406	22.2%	25.9%
Lakenham Primary School	Norwich, NR1 2HL	396	22.5%	29.8%

All the data in the report is from the financial year April 2024 to March 2025 consistent financial reporting return (CFR).

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## SUMMARY OF KEY REPORT FINDINGS

- **Expenditure:**  
Eastover's total spend is £2.7M, mid-range among other schools.
- **Reserves:**  
Eastover holds £609,247 in reserves, the highest in the group, plus an in-year surplus of £92,644.  
£180K ring-fenced for building improvements  
£12K Autism Fund  
£170K for 2025/26 budget  
£259K contingency (partly needed for 2026/27)
- **Staffing:**  
Teaching/support costs total £1.9M, mid-range.  
Workforce structure: fewer teachers but more support staff due to high SEN/EAL needs.
- **Educational Supplies:**  
£101K—22% above average, upper tier among other schools.
- **Utilities & Catering:**  
Utilities £49K and catering £112K, both typical and mid-range.
- **Overall Position:**  
Eastover is in a position of strong financial health and currently has a lower level of expenditure compared with other schools, while also holding the highest level of reserves. This position requires careful consideration over the coming years as we decide which planned projects should proceed, particularly as a significant proportion of our funds are ring-fenced for initiatives that have not yet taken place. While these reserves provide important financial security, it is essential that we balance future planning with the responsibility to invest our annual budget in the pupils who are in school now, rather than maintaining an excessively large amount of ring-fenced funding for future projects.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION POINTS

1. Balance future planning with the responsibility to invest our annual budget in the pupils who are in school now, rather than maintaining an excessively large amount of ring-fenced funding for future projects. The headteacher needs to decide what projects are to be carried out.
2. Ensure that learning resources are being purchased necessarily and that current resources are well maintained. The headteacher continues to monitor and control the purchase of all central learning resources. All budget holders are only allowed to spend within their allocated agreed budget.

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## REPORT CHARTS & ANALYSIS

Chart 1:

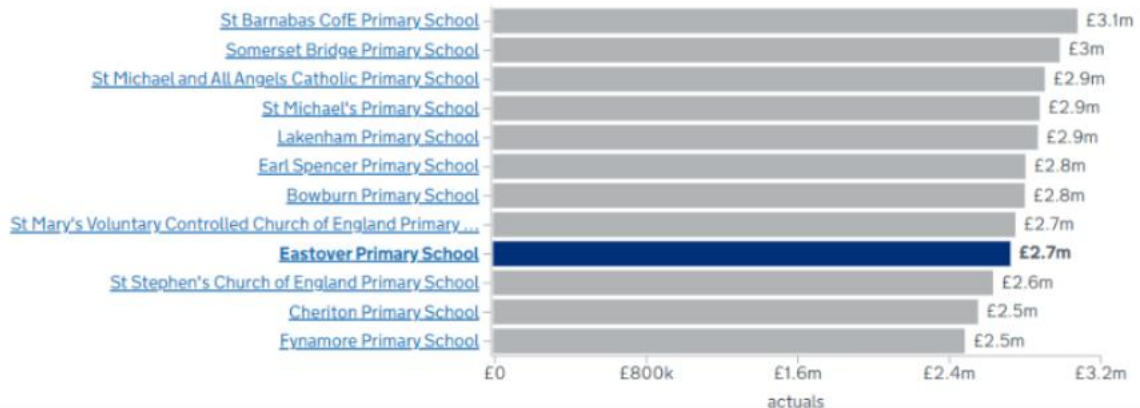
### Total expenditure

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actuals



Eastover Primary School's total expenditure for the year is £2.7 million, placing it in the middle range of spending compared with the other schools in the benchmarking group. Several schools show higher overall expenditure—most notably St Barnabas CofE Primary School at £3.1 million, Somerset Bridge Primary at £3 million, and St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School at £2.9 million. A number of schools operate with similar levels of spending to Eastover, including Lakenham Primary and St Michael's Primary (both around £2.9 million) and Earl Spencer and Bowburn Primary Schools (both £2.8 million). Eastover's spending is also higher than that of some comparators, such as St Stephen's (£2.6 million) and Cheriton and Fynamore Primary Schools (each £2.5 million). Overall, Eastover's expenditure profile indicates a balanced and typical spending position, neither at the upper nor lower extremes of the peer group.

**Chart 2:**

School Name	Location	Pupil Numbers	In Year Balance	Revenue Reserve
Eastover Primary School	Bridgwater, TA6 5EX	407	£92,644	£609,247
St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School	Liverpool, L32 0TP	394	-£101,596	-£105,820
St Michael's Primary School	Reading, RG30 4AS	394	-£87,107	£244,705
Bowburn Primary School	Bowburn, DH6 5FP	395	£107,584	£533,640
St Barnabas CofE Primary School	Worcester, WR3 8NZ	398	-£133,550	-£296,344
Cheriton Primary School	Folkestone, CT20 3EP	404	£8,788	£104,596
St Stephen's Church of England Primary School	Blackburn, BB1 5PE	400	£7,286	£251,266
Earl Spencer Primary School	Northampton, NN5 7DE	391	£29,224	£173,323
Somerset Bridge Primary School	Bridgwater, TA6 6AH	413	£83,072	£515,398
St Mary's VCCE Primary School	Bridgwater, TA6 7LX	443	£33,734	£544,598
Fynamore Primary School	Calne, SN11 9UG	406	£46,960	£3,109
Lakenham Primary School	Norwich, NR1 2HL	396	£76,347	£15,954

Eastover Primary School is in a notably strong financial position compared with the other schools in the benchmarking group. Its in-year balance of £92,644 is among the highest surpluses recorded, exceeded only by Bowburn Primary School, while several comparator schools are operating with substantial in-year deficits. Eastover's revenue reserve of £609,247 is the highest in the dataset, placing the school well above its peers in terms of financial resilience. While several schools hold moderate reserves, several have very low or negative balances, which contrasts sharply with Eastover's robust reserve position. Overall, Eastover Primary School demonstrates strong financial health both in-year and cumulatively when benchmarked against the other schools in the chart.

However, it should be noted that part of the £609,247 reserves that Eastover is holding £180k ringfenced for Build Improvement Plan hut area and Yr 2 Learning space improvements, £12k ringfenced in an Autism Fund for the SENCO lead to spend as they see fit, £170k needed to support the 25/26 budget. This leaves £259,235 as general contingency but some of this will need to be used to help support the 26/27 budget.

### Chart 3:

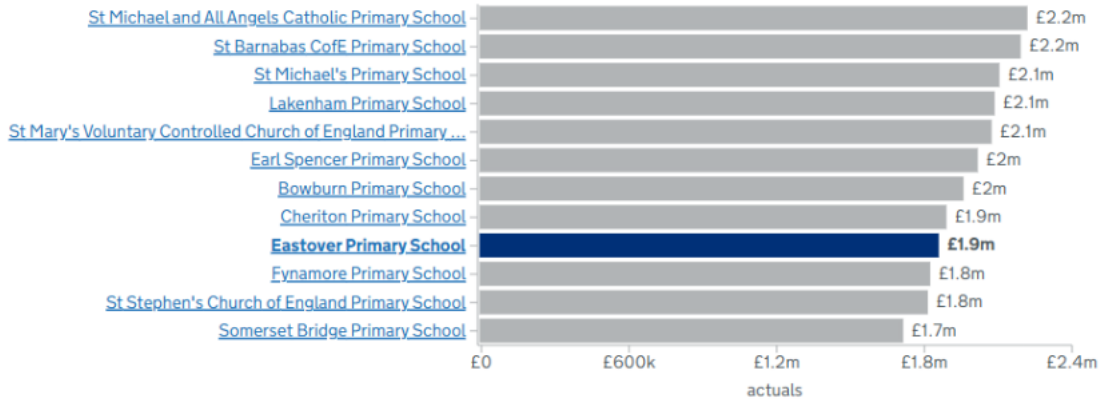
#### Total teaching and teaching support staff costs

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actuals

E01 E02 E26 E03 E27



Eastover Primary School reports £1.9 million in total teaching and teaching support staff costs, placing it in the mid-range compared with the other schools in the benchmarking group. Several schools demonstrate higher expenditure in this area, including St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School and St Barnabas CofE Primary School (both £2.2 million) and St Michael's and Lakenham Primary Schools (each £2.1 million). Several schools report similar levels of staffing expenditure to Eastover, such as Bowburn Primary (£2.0 million) and Cheriton Primary (£1.9 million). Eastover's costs are notably higher than those of the lowest-spending schools, including St Stephen's (£1.8 million) and Somerset Bridge Primary (£1.7 million). Overall, Eastover's teaching and support staff expenditure sits comfortably within the typical spending range of the comparison group, neither at the top nor bottom end of the distribution

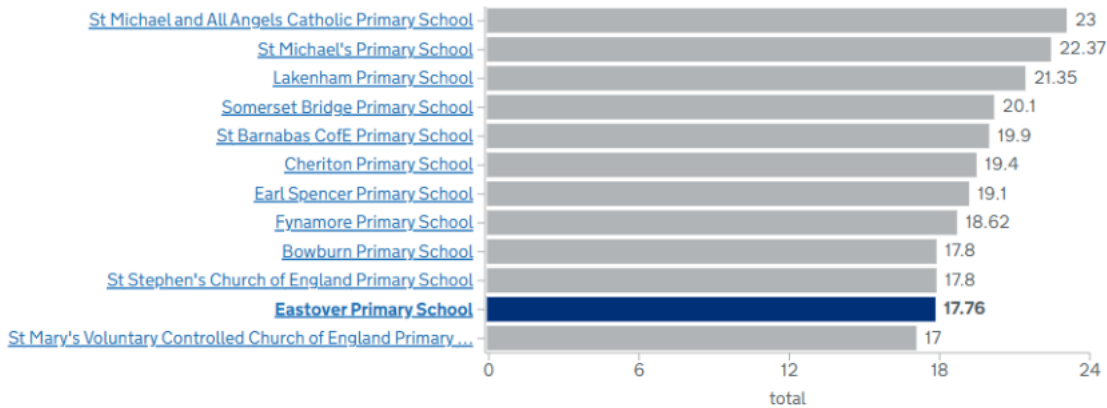
### Chart 4:

#### Total number of teachers (Full Time Equivalent)

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total



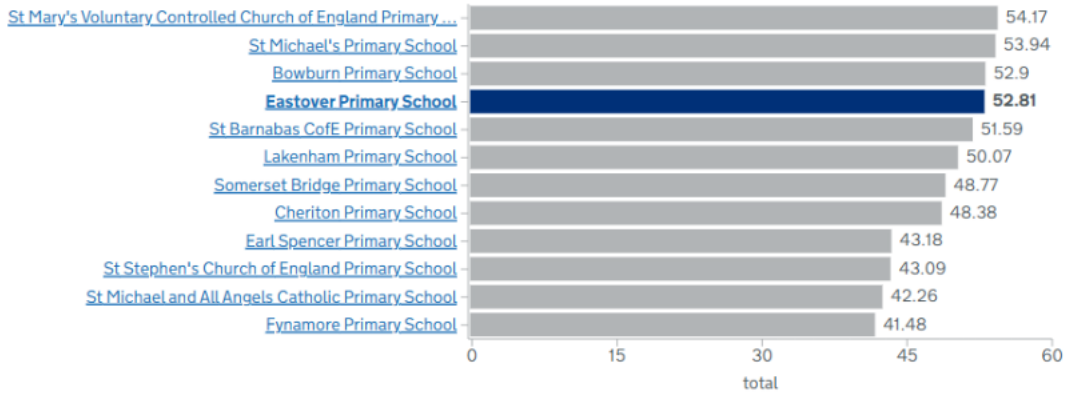
**Chart 5:**

**School workforce (Full Time Equivalent)**

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total

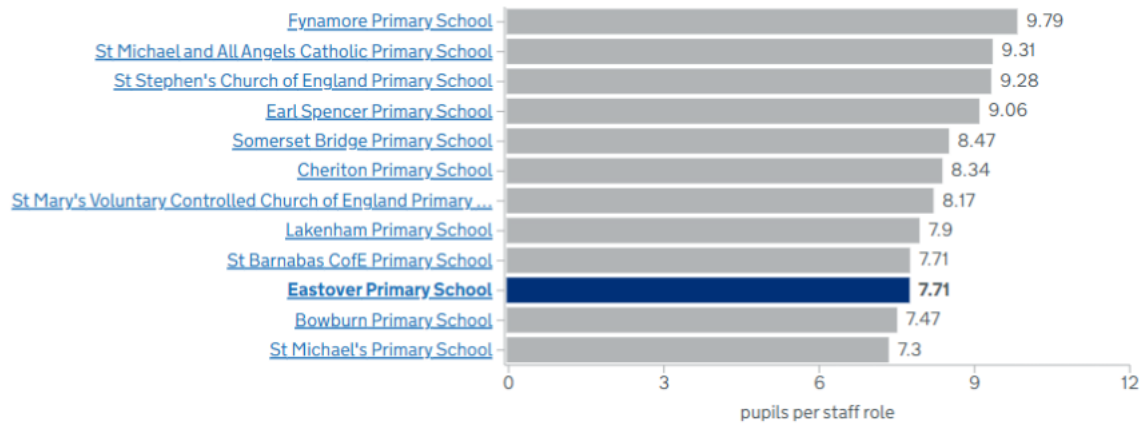


**School workforce (Full Time Equivalent)**

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pupils per staff role



Our teaching staff numbers are among the lowest; however, our overall school workforce is one of the highest. This is because we employ a larger proportion of support staff compared to other schools. As shown in Chart 6, we have the second-highest expenditure on non-educational support staff.

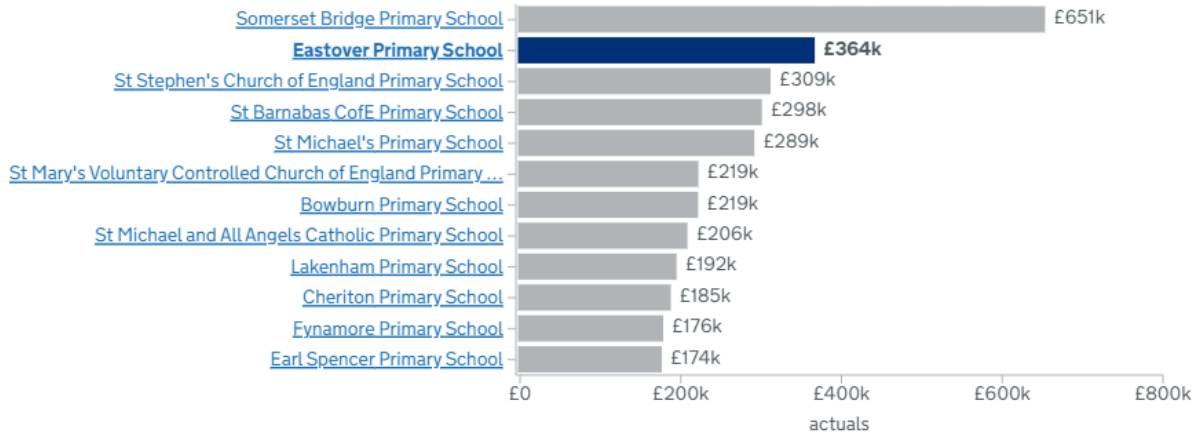
A likely reason for this is that Eastover requires more 1-to-1 staff and a greater number of non-classroom-based roles to meet the needs of our high proportion of SEN and EAL pupils.

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### Chart 6:

#### Total non-educational support staff costs

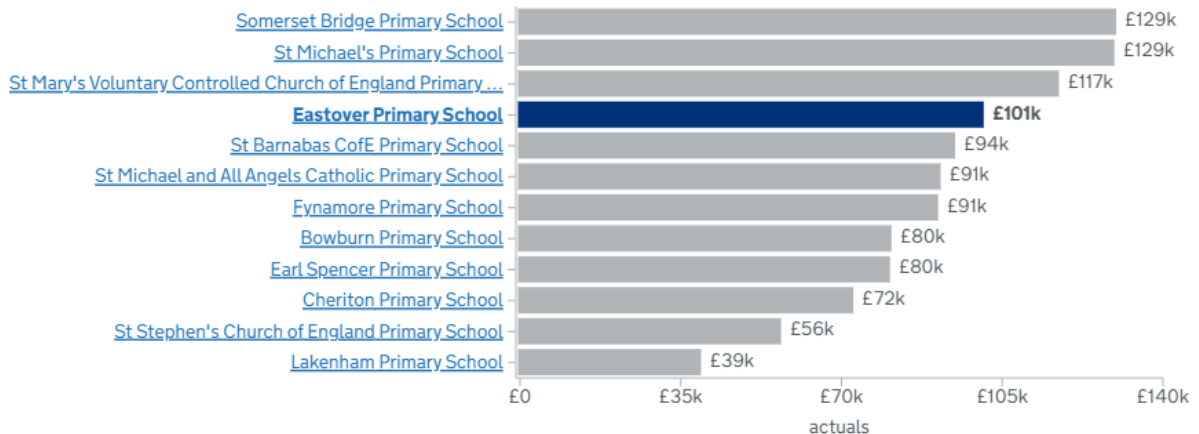
E05 E07 E28a



### Chart 7:

#### Total educational supplies costs

E21 E19

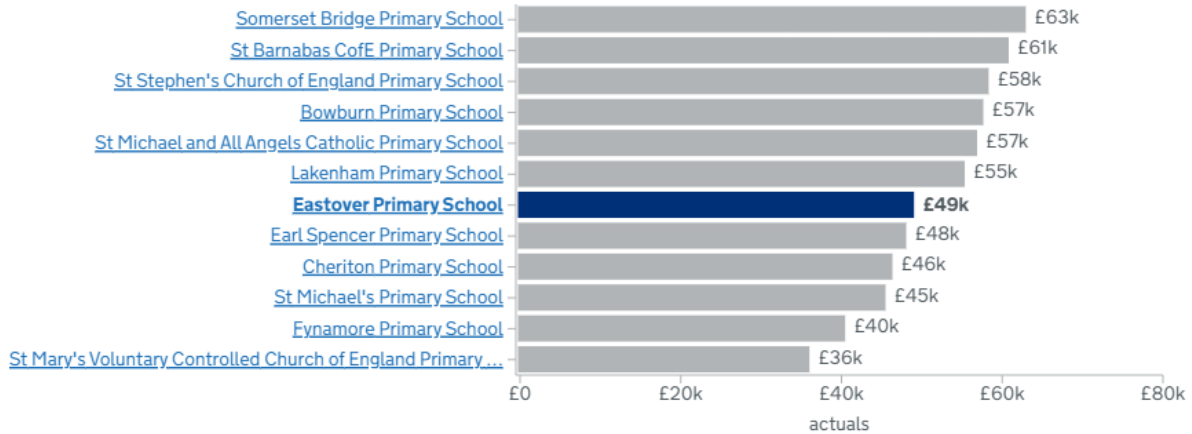


Eastover Primary School's total educational supplies cost of £101k places it in the upper tier among the 12 benchmarked schools. It is significantly above the median (£87.5k) and 22% higher than average spending, indicating relatively high investment in educational resources. However, it remains below the top spenders (Somerset Bridge and St Michael's at £129k), suggesting room for efficiency improvements while maintaining resource quality.

### Chart 8:

#### Total utilities costs

E16 E15

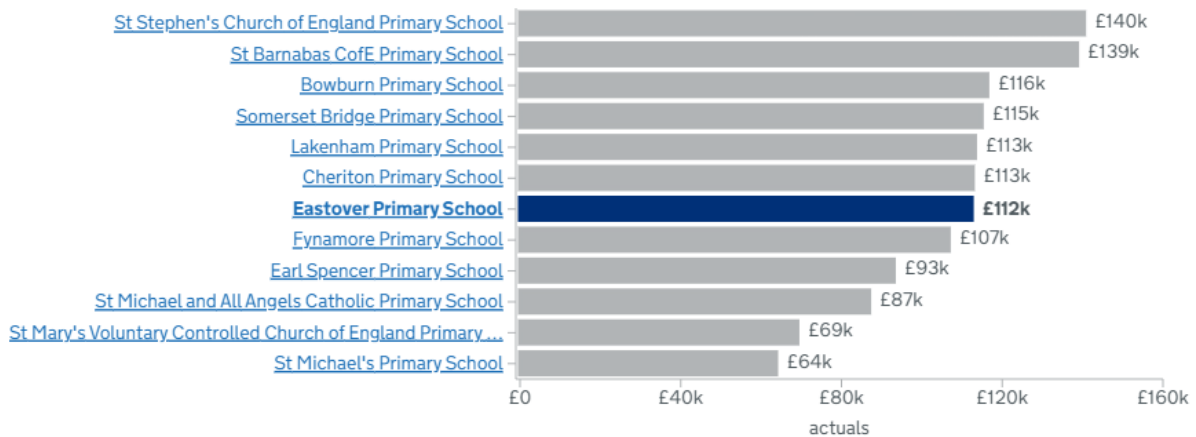


Eastover Primary School’s utilities costs total £49,000, placing it around the middle of the benchmarking group. Several schools spend noticeably more, up to £63,000. While others spend slightly less, with the lowest at £36,000. Overall, Eastover’s utilities expenditure is typical and broadly in line with other schools, indicating no unusual cost pressures in this area.

### Chart 9:

#### Total catering costs (gross)

E06 E25



Eastover Primary School’s catering costs total £112,000, placing it mid-range compared with other schools. Several schools spend more, up to £140,000. While others spend considerably less, with the lowest at £64,000. Overall, Eastover’s catering expenditure is in line with other schools' expenditure and shows no unusual cost variation.