ParentPayGroup

Service Definition

SIMS FMS



parentpaygroup.com

Service definition: SIMS FMS

Service description

Introduction to SIMS FMS

A modern, cloud-native finance system for schools

SIMS FMS is the next generation, cloud-native finance system designed specifically for schools. It brings budgeting, income, expenditure, reporting and compliance together in one intuitive platform — helping schools save time, stay compliant and make confident financial decisions.

Built on decades of school finance expertise, SIMS FMS has been redesigned for how schools work today. Clean screens, logical workflows and navigation consistent with SIMS mean staff spend less time learning the system and more time in control of their finances. FMS is accessible for users without formal accountancy training, while still providing the depth and rigour required for robust financial management.

Clear financial control and confident planning

SIMS FMS enables schools to track, forecast and manage budgets with confidence, providing clear oversight of income and expenditure at every level. Granular budget controls, commitment tracking and real-time visibility help reduce overspend and support stronger financial planning and decision-making.

Secure, compliant and inspection-ready

As a secure, cloud-native solution, SIMS FMS can be accessed anytime, anywhere, on any device. It supports statutory and local reporting requirements, including VAT, ESFA and Local Authority returns, helping schools remain compliant and inspection ready. The system is designed to provide accurate, dependable data that supports audits, inspections and financial oversight.

Interoperable and integrated with the wider finance ecosystem

SIMS FMS is designed to work seamlessly with other systems commonly used in education, reducing duplication and ensuring financial data remains accurate and consistent. Interoperability includes:

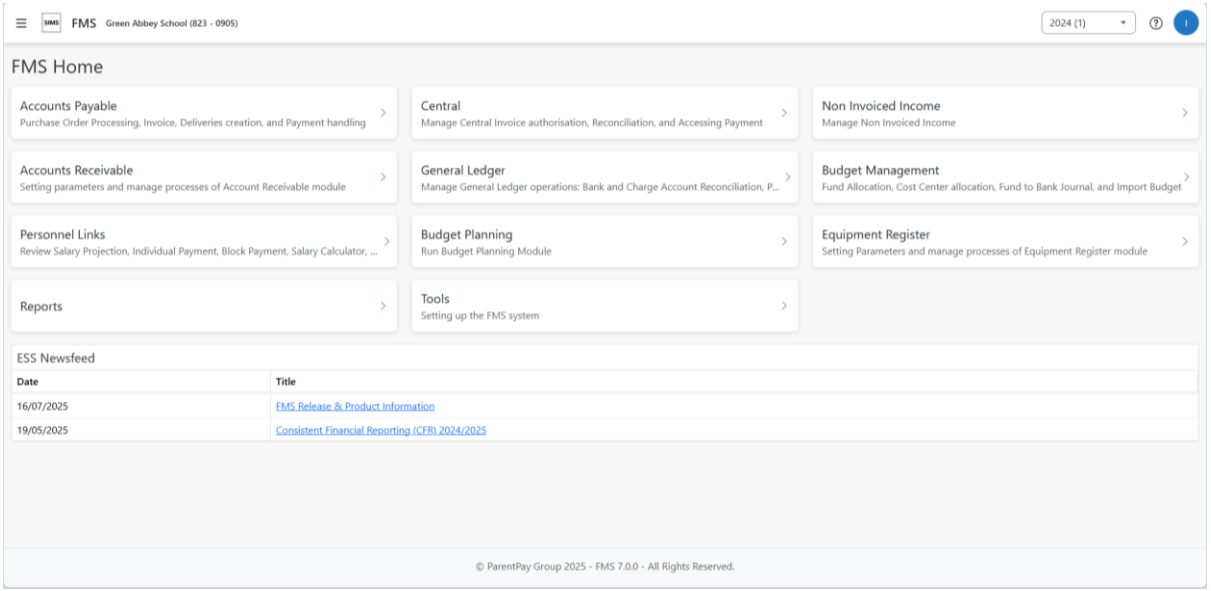
- A dedicated hub supporting Making Tax Digital for VAT and ESFA returns
- Electronic ordering interoperability with third-party education suppliers
- Import facilities for payroll journals from external payroll systems
- Transaction import and export to central accounting systems for non-cheque book schools
- Import routines for salary commitments based on staff contracts held in SIMS MIS

In addition, SIMS FMS integrates deeply with SIMS MIS and related budgeting and e-procurement tools, ensuring financial and staffing data is aligned and up to date.

A dependable foundation for school finance

Together, these capabilities deliver a dependable, modern finance system that simplifies day-to-day tasks, strengthens financial control and supports better financial outcomes across the school.

“The new Finance system removes so much duplication. One entry updates everywhere it needs to. That’s going to save us a lot of admin errors”.
School Business Manager, Secondary School



In summary, the following features are included in our Finance SIMS FMS package.

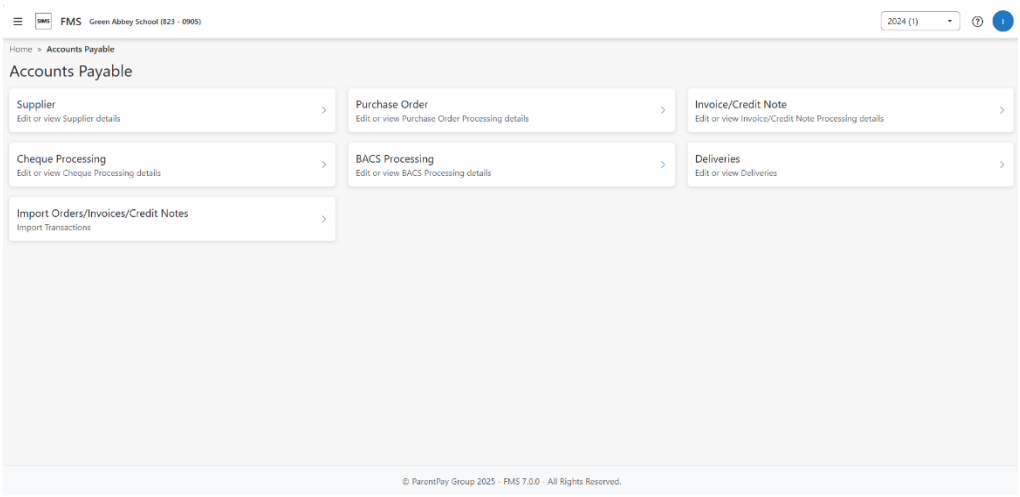
Accounts Payable

SIMS FMS Accounts Payable enables schools to manage the full purchase to payments process compliantly and efficiently. Purchase ordering with defined approvers can be used so that delegation of authority levels can be consistently applied.

FMS allows for three-way matching of purchase orders, goods received and invoices. Spending limits can be set at the cost centre and cost central/Ledger code level ensuring budgets are controlled.

Reports listing commitments and completed transactions for additional visibility and cost control are available enabling careful budget monitoring at both the cost centre and ledger code levels.

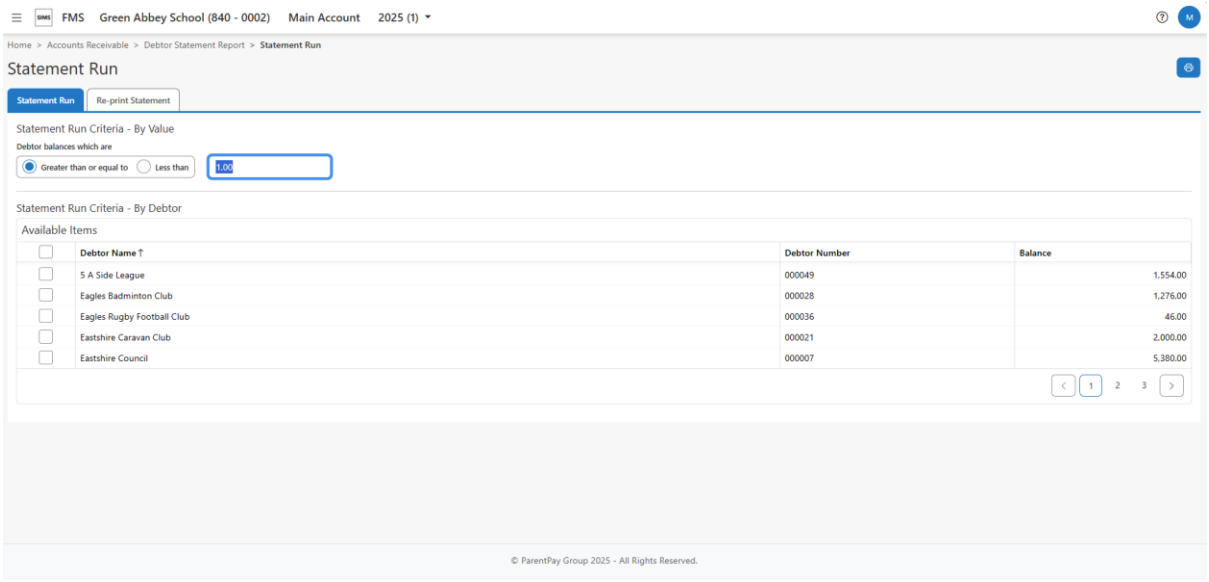
Payment processes are also focused on efficient and on time payment with alerts and notifications to make sure that payments are timely and accurate.



Accounts Receivable

Accounts payable enables schools to record on their non-invoiced income from letting their resources and other income. This could be for the letting of the hall or school pitches to local groups supporting the community.

Debtors can be created and tracked, Invoice generated and receipts recorded all automatically updating the FMS general ledger seamlessly without the need for further manual processing. A comprehensive set of 7 reports including Aged Debtor reports and statement run generation make tracking and auditing of non-invoiced income straight forward.



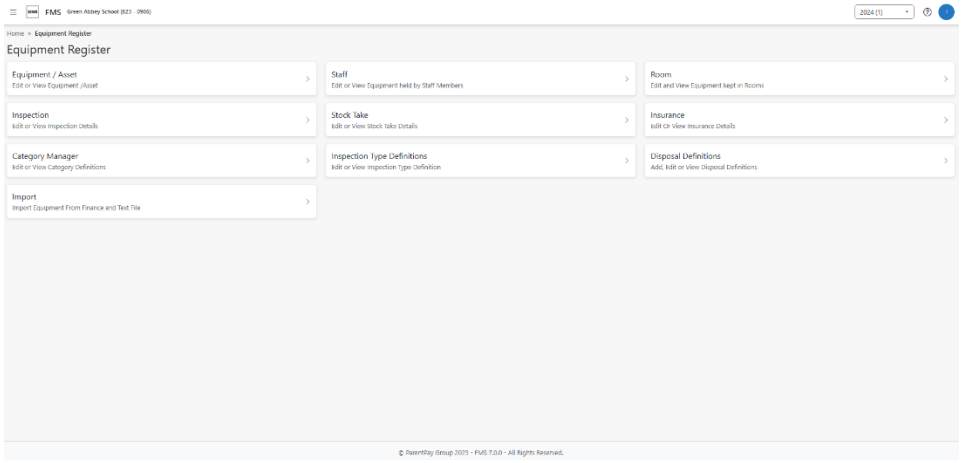
Asset Registers

FMS includes a dedicated equipment/asset register management module and can be configured to manage equipment and the calculation of depreciation on assets.

Assets can be stored with a unique number, serial number, holder, security marks, room, main uses, support contract details, insurance details, purchase information, reasons for disposal

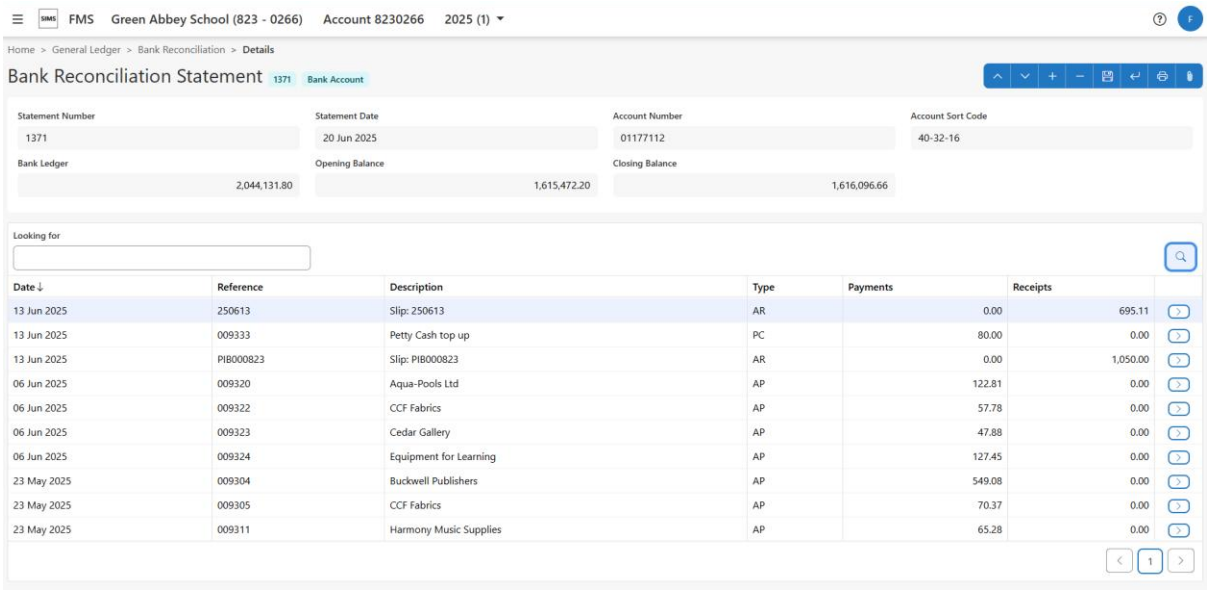
and notes. Assets can be categorised, and include inspections, electric safety inspections and stocktakes recorded against them.

FMS Asset Management allows both Straight Line and Declining Balance depreciation methods. Asset types can be set up and depreciation types attached. Deprecation can be calculated automatically and posted to the relevant depreciation and accumulated depreciation ledger codes.



Bank Reconciliation

SIMS FMS contains bank reconciliation functionality with the ability to add journal directly on the bank statement for any direct transaction. Transactions are fully reconciled in the system and locked.



Budget Planning

School Budget in FMS is completed through the dedicated Budget Planning module. This module allows multiple budget scenarios based on selection of Funding plans, Salary Plans and I&E plans to be created.

Multiple forecasts can include data from the original and current budgets, including year-to-date actuals which allows accurate forecasts and adjustments to be made. When entering

forecast amendments, notes can be captured to reflect forecast reasons. Notes can then be included in reports for School Senior Management as well as both Governor and Local Authority oversight. Moreover, snapshots can be captured, so historic positions can be reviewed and compared with current forecast positions, aiding informed decision making. By being able to appraise variances to date, forecast deviations can be better scrutinised and justified.

When recording forecast changes, the user can input both the variance reason for justification and reporting as well as the action required based on the forecast entry thus providing an audit and oversight of the process and outcomes.

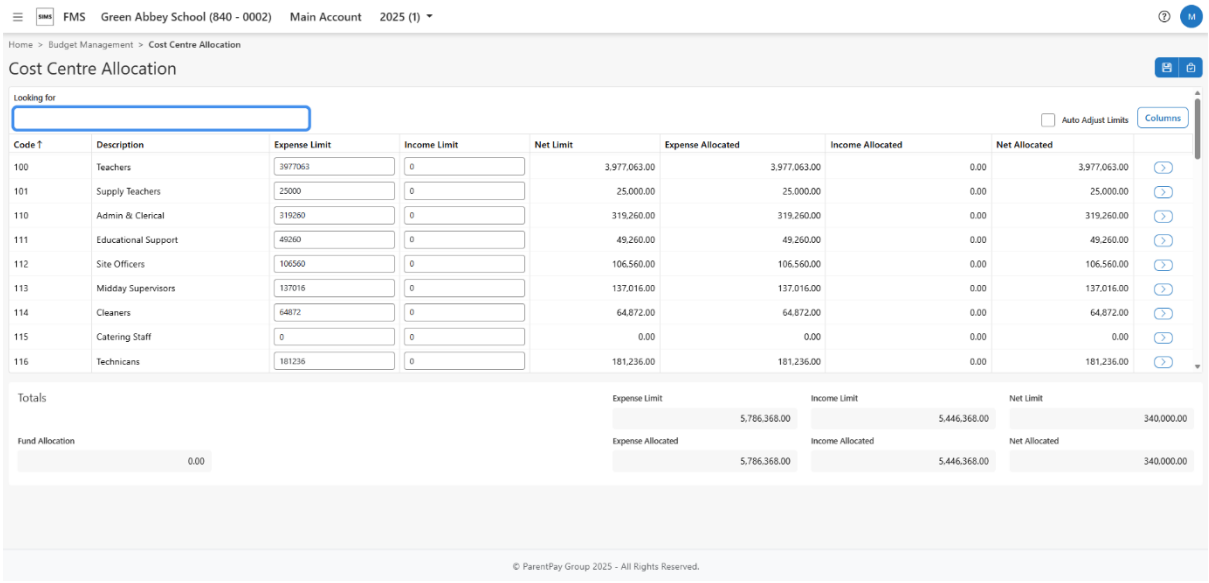
Salary plans can be calculated using data from staff contracts, taking into account planned or anticipated changes to pay rates and salary scales where applicable, as part of the contractual process. This then means a salary period breakdown and salary plan budget breakdown can be reported on and gives complete oversight of potential staffing costs.

Funding plans can include Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) calculations as part of the calculations of the funding plans as well as other funding sources the school may have access to.

The income and expenditure plans provide a detailed breakdown of all operational income and non-salary costs, with the flexibility to create multiple scenarios to support informed decision-making. Once complete reports can be produced as part of the Annual Budget listing and budget plan period breakdown reporting.

Once budgets are contained within the FMS, users can fix the original agreed budget and adjust the current budget, plus report on financial performance against both metrics. This is possible through the cost-central allocation routine, that fully audits all changes, the fund allocation entry screens and the fund-to-bank journal process for recording the delegated income.

These tools, alongside comprehensive reporting on budgets, mean the FMS can support schools with both planning and managing the budgets effectively.



Central

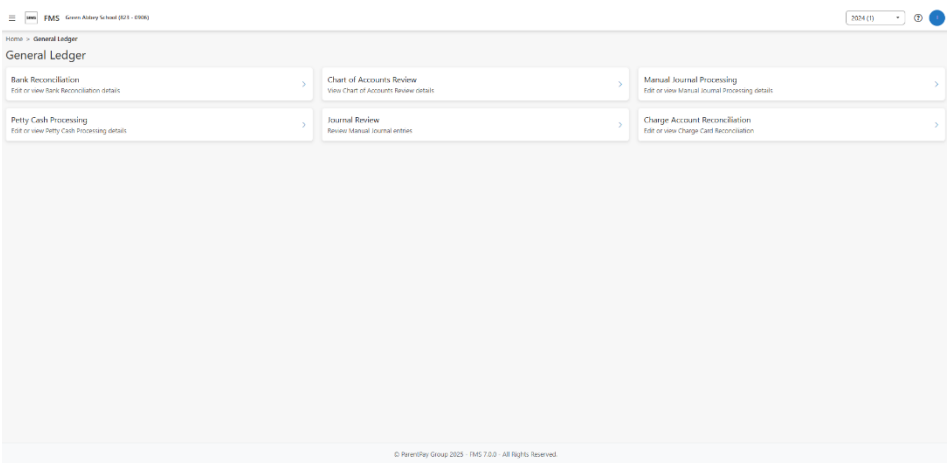
Central functionality is available for those schools who do not have their own bank account. This allows for the exports of transaction details for payment by the Local Authority as well as the importation of Automatic reconciliation file so that committee transactions can be updated and reflected in the schools' accounts once paid by the Local Authority. This allows schools to manage their accounts locally with oversight and control form the Local authority for payments.

General Ledger

The General Ledger in SIMS FMS contains several specific functions that support day-to-day financial management and reporting:

Manual Journal processing enables the following journal types:

- Normal journals
- Reversing journals
- Opening Balance journals
- Cash Book journals
- VAT Reimbursement journals
- VAT Transfer Journals



Non-Invoiced Income

Non-Invoice Income can be used for capturing a wide variety of income streams including some examples are donations, income from the sales of lost property, vending machine commissions. Method of receipt covering

- Cash
- Credit Card
- Cheque
- Bank Transfer (Direct)

As well as received from and the general ledger codes can be captured against a receipt, making the update of the general ledger completely automatic and giving a full audit of all no invoices income.

Petty Cash

Petty cash functionality enables an online view of current petty cash in hand balance to allow immediate reconciliation with Pety Cash tin(s). All expenditure and reimbursements can be quickly and accurately record or posting to both petty cash balance and transaction entry against relevant expenditure general ledger codes. This is supported by a complete set of 7 reports focused dedicated foe Petty cash reporting. This enables full petty cash transactions auditing and tracking.

Real Time Reporting and Insights

FMS Reporting supports efficient access to data, allowing users to drill down from high-level summaries into detailed transactions for deeper analysis. Reports can be tailored by showing or hiding columns, filtered to meet specific needs, and saved for future re-use, reducing repetition and saving time.

Historic financial views allow users to analyse multi-year data within a single report, supporting trend analysis, forecasting and informed decision-making.

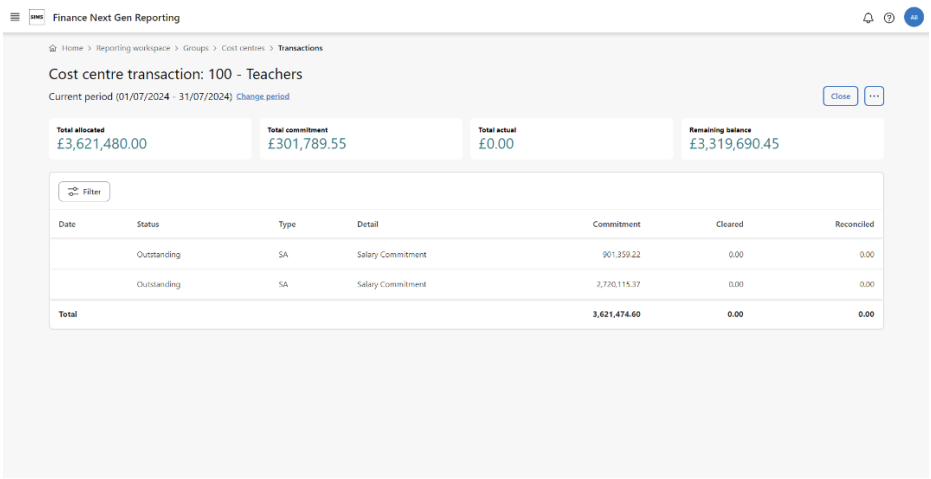
Reports can be exported in common file formats, including XLS and CSV, making it easy to share accurate, up-to-date information with governors, finance committees, auditors and funders.

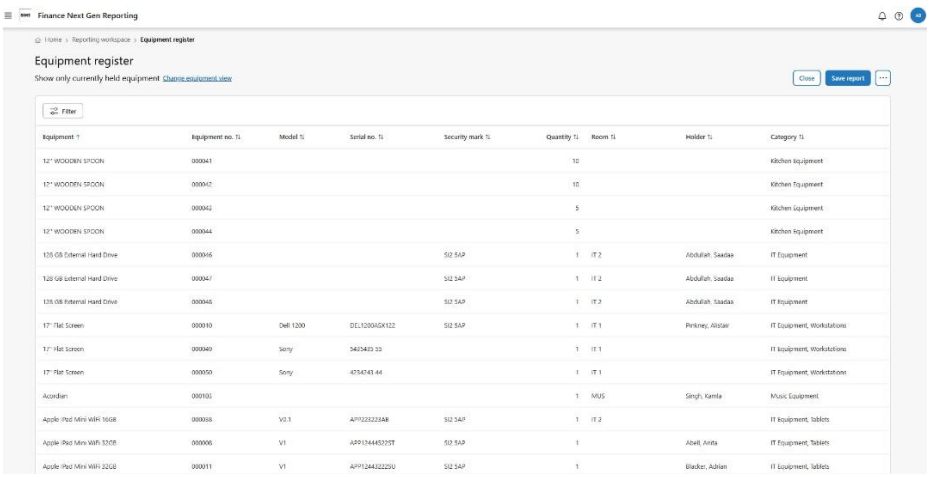
Together, these capabilities reduce the time spent preparing reports and increase confidence in the data being shared, helping schools remain compliant, transparent and inspection ready.

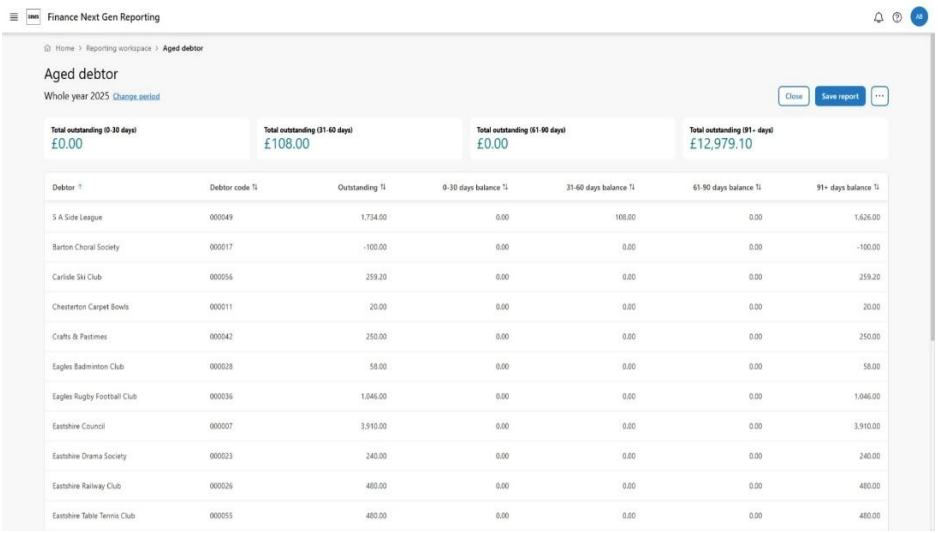
Reports include, but are not limited to:

- Aged creditors and aged debtors
- Statutory and regulatory reporting
- Banking and central reporting
- Cost centre and ledger code reports
- Equipment and asset registers
- Petty cash reporting
- Trial balances

Please see below for example cost centre, equipment register and aged debtor reports.







ParentPay Group IT operations

- ParentPay Group operations and infrastructure is fully resilient and prepared to handle a comprehensive set of serious failures. These are exercised regularly through various mechanisms
- All critical systems are replicated between data centres and backups are encrypted and replicated to cloud storage in our UK Data Centres
- Our RTO for all unscheduled service outages is 4 hours and RPO is near real-time
- Office locations have redundant internet connectivity to ensure continued service for telephony and SaaS systems used for the delivery of the service
- Telephony and Support systems are cloud based and are resilient to failure, with Disaster Recovery capability
- ParentPay Group operates a secondary datacentre for use in a disaster scenario
- All staff without ParentPay Group are able to work from any location, with all systems enabled for remote access. This ensures that all functions of the company can operate without the risk of a physical location being lost
- Multi-year data
- Drillable reporting levels
- Sortable columns
- Totals at the top
- Modern export formats
- Save filtered reports for later use

Onboarding support

- We have 15 years of experience, rolling out multi-site projects across the UK
- Our Project team work to Prince2 methodologies
- Schools are supported by our Onboarding team, who will manage their site configuration and training programme
- We offer training for the MAT/local authority, to ensure they understand how to support their schools and use the central administration tools and processes

Offboarding support

Schools wishing to end their ParentPay Group contract should contact our Support Desk. We will then agree a suitable end date for the school. Our support team will then guide the school through the close down process.

Service constraints

n/a

Customisation

FMS has a broad range of available customisations to ensure it is tailored to the unique requirements of the school. For example, users can customise user access and permissions, cost centre and ledger codes, reports and outputs.

FMS

Service availability

Service availability target is 99.5% for all applications and services. SIMS achieved an uptime of 99.95% in 2025. Service availability is provided as per service levels defined in the Customer Service Agreement. This is 24/7/365, with documented maintenance windows agreed with the customer. These maintenance windows take place outside of normal school hours.

System availability is monitored and reported on a monthly basis and can be reported to the customer as required.

Support

Our service desk operates from our Chelmsford office between 08:00 and 17:30, Monday to Friday, excluding UK bank holidays and the three working days between Christmas and New Year. The desk also opens from 07:00 on critical dates such as statutory returns and exam results download days and remains operational during school holidays to ensure uninterrupted support.

We provide omnichannel support for queries via our robust knowledge base of help articles. Any queries that can't be answered can be raised easily via email, telephone, online forms and in-app web chat.
The Service Desk operates within a clear case grading structure to ensure issues are escalated appropriately. Urgent issues are targeted for resolution within two hours, with a target of 75% within one hour.

Priority		Contact method	SLA Response time (business hours)	Resolution time (business hours)	
1	**Critical -** Entire system failure impacting all users	Phone	**30 seconds**	**75%** within 60 minutes	**90%** within 120 minutes
		Portal/ Email	Immediate escalation and Analyst response within 20 minutes		
2	**High -** Key system failure with no workaround, impacting some users or one part of the system	Phone	**30 seconds**	**75%** within 120 minutes	**90%** within 6 Hours
		Portal/ Email	Analyst response - 20 minutes		
3	**Medium -** An issue causing impact, but a workaround is available or only some users/records affected	Phone	**30 seconds**	**50%** within 2 hours	**90%** within 8 hours
		Portal/ Email	Analyst response within 2 hours		
4	**Low -** System usage assistance/guidance is required	Phone	**30 seconds**	**50%** within 6 hours	**90%** within 8 hours
		Portal/ Email	Analyst response within 6 hours		

FMS

After sales support

Technical requirements

SIMS FMS is compatible with Android, iOS. MacOS, ChromeOS, Windows, or other, with HTML 5 browser support including Edge, Firefox, Chrome and Safari.

Maintenance management

Upgrade management and the application of patches and updates is wholly owned by ParentPay Group. We regularly add new functionality to SIMS via upgrades over night to benefit users and we no longer need individual client devices to be patched. All except for urgent updates are applied out of working hours, such as overnight or on weekend. We programme planned maintenance in advance and publish notifications of planned maintenance and major feature upgrades to customers via the Customer Support Portal, via email and via in application notifications.

System monitoring

Systems are monitored 24/7/365 and dependant on the severity of an incident and user type, customers are informed via email, the Customer Support Portal or within the application.

Hosting locations

SIMS FMS platforms are hosted within the UK and the EEA. Non-EEA processing may include support escalations, which require non-EEA development teams to access data remotely. Personal data may be processed outside of the EEA only with the necessary safeguards and compliance requirements, in full adherence with data protection law.

Security

ParentPay Group (PPG) has invested significantly in technology and specialist teams to monitor and maintain our security posture. PPG is committed to cyber innovation and a member of the Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership (CISP). We monitor cyber health by leveraging Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) via an independent third-party specialist, Black Kite.

When measured against industry peers, we are one of the only cybersecurity A-rated education suppliers in the industry. Our dedicated security function provides:

- A security team of 12 experienced cyber and data protection professionals focused entirely on protecting your data.
- 24/7 monitoring across our entire enterprise, by a world leading Security Operations Centre team and global industry specialists.
- A full suite of critical certifications for security and compliance (see ‘Compliance and Assurance’, below.)

PPG employs a robust cybersecurity framework to protect data from cyber threats, including phishing, breaches, ransomware, Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS), and unauthorised access.

FMS

Book a demonstration

We'd love to show you what's new with SIMS FMS.
Please contact us to arrange a demonstration with one of our product experts.