



Summer 2018

Dear Parents & Carers

As the summer break rapidly approaches we would like to take this opportunity to update you on the work the Board of Governors has been doing since Easter but to also share with you our grave concerns about the school funding crisis in the UK and how it negatively impacts our own school.

Our **Finance & Premises** sub-committee continues to grapple with the funding crisis with challenging and productive discussions. The committee were delighted when as a direct result of the Senior Leadership Team's cautious spending, the school were finish the financial year (31 March 2017) with not only a balanced budget, but some underspend to carry forward to the next financial year.

Our forecast for this current financial year (1 April 2018-31 March 2019) is that we will again balance the budget with a very small underspend to carry over.

Funding Crisis

As many of us know, our education staff are underpaid and overworked and have had a 1% pay cap on public sector wages for many years, whilst cost of living has increased.

Trade unions have been lobbying government and were recently successful in obtaining a 2% pay increase annually for both teachers and education support staff. Alongside this, pension contributions from employers have also been ordered to be increased.

Whilst this is welcome news for our well deserved staff, unfortunately, the funding received from government does not take account of these promised increases and indeed, funding from government has not changed in 8 years. Moreover, with the government introduced "Fairer Funding Formula" our schools' funding is DECREASING.

Some larger schools are able to cope with these increases as they receive more funding given they have more pupils on their roll. With a one-form entry school however, every increase in cost and reduction in funding becomes quite crippling.

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The real term impact is that despite all of the governors' efforts 2 years ago, major staffing restructures and operating on a skeleton staff, our personnel costs for the next 3 years are forecast to rise to 96% of our total revenue income.

We are in a position where we simply cannot cut any more costs out of the school budget and before long, staffing costs will undoubtedly rise to 100% of the income unless government makes some quick and drastic changes.

Along with paying for premises updates to adhere to health & safety rules paying utility bills plus of course essential curriculum resources, we are in a position where we are no longer able to provide basic and essential items to our teachers and children.

How you can help

To this end, Mr Sweetingham will be writing to all parents and inviting them to help the school by purchasing stationery items from an Amazon Wish List that will be created. The Wish List is much like a "wedding list" in that a series of items will be listed, together with how many of those items are required. Parents can choose exactly how many items to purchase and delivery can go straight to the school.

We are also investigating how we can join in with campaigning and lobbying the government and may write to you separately if we decide to go down that route.

As a Board of Governors, we are utterly appalled to be calling upon parents to help the school in this fashion. Most parents are already taxpayers and would fully expect their taxes to be fully funding their children's education. Alas that is not so.

In addition, we continue to plead for parents to pay into the Maintenance Fund as this fund alone has to pay for the repairs and maintenance of the school premises plus of course, our landlord responsibilities to the school cottage.

Moving on to our other work...

Our **Admissions Panel** coordinated the proposal of a change to the criteria under which we admit children to our school to ensure children of staff can attend the school and that the school is serving the needs of the community as well as our church. The proposal was ratified by the full Governing Body in January and of course, the panel

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met in February to review 88 applications to the school for YR entry in 2018-19. It is wonderful that our little school continues to be so popular amongst the community.

The **Teaching & Learning Standards** sub-committee has had a very busy year

Fortunately the **Personnel** sub-committee has had a reasonably quiet year with only a few policies to review and of course, ensuring that all staff have thorough appraisals, undertake continuing professional development and seek wherever possible, to improve their work/life balance.

Monitoring School Life

As usual we've been very active in terms of being involved in school life. This involvement allows us to be sure that what we're told is happening really is.

Four governors (Imogen Hall, Loretta Okpokiri, Dr Helen Eracleous & Jaime Goumal) attended a **learning walk** in November. Highlights included discussions with the Y6 Learning Ambassadors who accompanied us, a pupil voice session where we were able to talk to seven children from different years who told us that they are enjoying the increased time on computing and the new music lessons, and seeing the positive learning environment in each classroom. As always we were blown away by how much work each teacher puts into each lesson and how well behaved the children at our school are. The best comment was from one child who told us that coming to school puts her in a good mood 'because the teachers are so happy'.

Parking!

Just as a last plea, we continue to deal with serious complaints from our neighbours about parking at drop-off and pick-up. Please do not park over our neighbours driveways! Not only does it make them very angry, those gaps are very useful to pull into and allow cars to pass in the other direction and most importantly, keep our children safe!

If anyone has any ideas for how we could rectify this situation please do get in touch with school via the school office and share them. It's an issue we need to address.

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As always please do get in touch with us via governors@stjohnsn20.barnetmail.net and come along to our next AGM and Governor Drop-in on Thursday 12 July 2018 at 8.50am

We wish you all a wonderful summer break and look forward to welcoming you back in the September.

Lynne Evans
Chair
On behalf of the Board of Governors

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