

School Funding Letter

Dear Parents/Carers,

You will know from my newsletters that school funding has been an issue for a number of years, and whilst the governors and I have always done our very best with the resources we have, shrinking budgets have inevitably had an impact on the provision we can offer the children.

Earlier this year, a new National Funding Formula was implemented. Whilst no schools have lost funding based on the previous year, in the longer term there have been some 'gainers' and some 'losers' with this new formula—both at a county and school level. As a large school, Whiteley Primary has slightly benefited from the change which has helped to cover the rising costs which we are facing. However, what is still evident is that average funding per pupil in some counties is significantly lower than in others. When overall education funding is looked at, pupils in Hampshire receive the second lowest budget per school aged pupil compared to all other local authorities, with some authorities in London receiving over £3000 more per pupil a year. Some schools in London receive up to 70% more funding than schools of an identical size in different parts of the country. At the same time, many schools are facing real difficulties with teacher recruitment. There is also a large shortfall in funding for 'High Needs' in many local authorities, putting pressures on the system to be able to adequately provide for children with special needs both in specialist provision and within mainstream schools.

Headteachers from Hampshire have been working with colleagues from West Sussex and other more poorly funded local authorities who formed a non-party-political group called 'Worthless?' three years ago. This group have been trying to raise awareness of the difficulties facing schools in their areas, in particular to do with funding and recruitment. The Chair of the Hampshire Primary Headteacher's Executive has been working with the 'Worthless?' group, and was part of a contingent who presented their findings to the commons education select committee in January in the hope that the new funding formula would help to address the key issues. However, the issues remain, and so on Friday 28th September, 100s of Headteachers drawn from some of the poorest-funded local authorities in the country will be going to Downing Street to deliver a plea to the Treasury and Department for Education.

With the support of our school governors, I will be one of those Headteachers travelling to Downing Street on the 28th. As a member of the Hampshire Primary Headteacher's Executive, I feel it is very important that I support this event. I believe that all our children deserve fair and adequate funding to ensure equality of opportunity. Whilst up until now, Whiteley Primary has been able to manage with the available resources, I will be representing those colleagues from schools in our own area and

beyond whose finances are at breaking point, particularly smaller schools and those in more deprived areas who have been particularly affected by the new funding formula. We hope that by shining a light on the issues faced by schools in our areas that a much better and fairer settlement can be reached in order to support all of our children through their education.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Pennington – Headteacher