



St John's CofE Primary School Newsletter

Friday 8th March 2019

Our Praise Awards are on show in our 'Praise Book' in the front entrance. We celebrate achievement every Friday in Praise Assembly.

Out of School awards: Celebrated in Praise Assembly too.

Our dear Deputy Head, Mr. Hilliam, is leaving for a new exciting challenge.

After five successful years as our Deputy Headteacher, Mr. Hilliam has secured a Headship in Bristol. Mr. Hilliam has been a great asset to the school and we are very grateful for his hard work and dedication. He will be starting his new job in September so we will enjoy the rest of the year with him and wish him every success for the future. It is a great success for St Johns and for WMAT to train future leaders for a bright educational future for children in other schools. We are spreading a joy of learning and caring!

National Governance Association action on school funding

Wellsway Multi Academy Trust Board is taking part in the National Governance Association (NGA) co-ordinated action on school funding, being held to draw attention to the underfunding that is causing significant issues for schools across the country. WMAT trustees attended the mass lobby of MPs in Parliament on 28 February and are now in the process of meeting with the local MPs to ask them to lobby on behalf of schools in their constituencies. On Monday 4 March there is a full Parliamentary debate on education funding taking place and attached, for your information, is the briefing paper prepared by the NGA for MPs.

Monday 18th March Sports For Schools Event

This event is a sponsored event to support athletes aiming for the Olympics but the company stress that they are happy with any contribution and the focus of the day is not all about money. For the school it is an opportunity to meet an inspiring Para Olympian and to take part in fun activities. We will also meet another athlete later in the year for a similar activity day and this again will be all about opportunities to be inspired.

Thank you for helping us raise money for the Spiritual Garden all weather patio. We are counting the money you have kindly raised from the cake sale, wearing sports kit day, sponsored walk/ run and talent show. We'll have a total soon. Brilliant effort children - superstars all!

Another Super PTA Event:

Wednesday 20th March 6pm

PTA Bedtime Story Night

Letter to follow.

OPEN EVENING WEDNESDAY 3rd APRIL

3.15-5.00pm

Please come with your child to Open Evening. This is a chance to celebrate your child's work with them. Teachers will be on hand for a brief chat too. We also welcome you to tour around the whole school, visiting classrooms, to see the lovely work on display. *Please just come on in!*

Easter Holiday Fun for ages 5 to 11

Premier Sport are running their first Easter Holiday programme [here for us!](https://family.premier-education.com/courses) Please ask for information or follow this link: <https://family.premier-education.com/courses>

Cake Sale Friday 22nd March

Please bring donations of cakes to the hall on Friday 22nd March. Our Learning Assistants are raising money to buy sports kit for the children who represent us in football and netball matches. Please come and buy cakes after school too!

Author Visit

The children really enjoyed a visit from author Grant Roper on Monday. There was laughter and great engagement. We are very pleased so many parents chose to buy his book too.

Learning about Lent

Thank you for your help in walking with us to Church to mark the start of Lent. We also thank the PTA for providing pancakes on the same day, to help make the link with Lent. We are focusing on 'Acts of Kindness' during Lent in classrooms and will complete our understanding of this important time for Christians, with our Easter Service on 4th April at Church.



School funding

Westminster Hall debate

Monday 4 March 2019, 4.30pm

School governors and trustees are responsible for the financial oversight of their schools and deciding how the budget is spent. This week, school governors and trustees from your constituency may have contacted you to explain the difficult decisions that they are having to make as a result of school funding pressures, and to set out their concerns about the impact on pupils' education. The NGA coordinated this week of action, which saw more than 130 constituencies involved.

National Governance Association (NGA) is an independent charity representing and supporting governors, trustees and clerks in maintained schools and academies in England. NGA's goal is to improve the wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards.

Though every school and trust faces a different experience, the majority of governors and trustees are united by concerns about balancing school and trust budgets. They volunteer to provide the best for pupils and NGA supports them to make best use of public funding,

The current schools funding situation

The Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) calculated that total school spending per pupil has fallen by 8% in real terms between 2009-10 and 2017-18. This is in part due to a 55% cut in local authority spending on services for schools and cuts of over 20% to sixth-form funding. Funding provided per pupil to primary and secondary schools has also been hit hard over the past few years, falling 4% since 2015.

Despite making efficiencies, including using the tools and deals provided by the Department for Education, many governing boards report that they now simply have no room left in their budget. Familiar scenarios include replacing experienced teachers with newly qualified (and therefore cheaper) teachers; reducing the staff professional development budget, reduced support to the most vulnerable pupils, and cuts to the breadth of the curriculum.

Schools are also increasingly taking on roles previously provided by other bodies, both in the public and the voluntary sector. As funding is reduced for local authorities' statutory and non-statutory services, schools report having more difficulty in getting responses to concerns and therefore picking up pastoral issues in school. This is happening in some cases alongside the reduction in the number of pastoral and support staff that schools employ,

Why investment in education is urgently needed

In 2018, 5,218 governors and trustees responded to NGA's annual school governance survey:

- almost three quarters said that they are unable to manage funding pressures without negatively impacting pupils' education;
- only half of respondents' schools are able to balance their income and expenditure, with almost a third drawing on reserves, and of these, 75% expected that they would run out within two years;

- 74% of respondents said that current funding high needs funding is insufficient;
- 47% of respondents had reduced the number of support staff and 30% had reduced the number of teaching staff;
- 24% of respondents said that class sizes have been increased and 19% saying that teaching staff's contact time has been increased.

Summary of key asks of the government

NGA has compiled nine 'asks' for the spending review, based on the latest research and intelligence collected from governors and trustees. These are:

1. The core revenue budget must be increased by at least £2 billion per year so that the basic rate that schools get for each pupil covers the costs of their education

- As the Secretary of State for Education has recently acknowledged, schools are being asked to do more than ever.
- Additional costs that schools have had to absorb include the apprenticeship levy, increased pensions contributions and pay increases.
- The f40 group of lower funded local authority areas has calculated that the current funding shortfall for the core costs of schools (compared to its index linked activity-led formula which sets out the cost of delivering the standard of education expected of schools) is £2 billion per year.¹

A governor from a school in Westminster told us "our funding has reduced year-on-year since 2011. We received 8% less funding in 2018-19 than in 2014-15. We have set deficit budgets every year for the past five years and fund the shortfall from our rapidly decreasing reserves. We have had to make some teachers redundant, we have cut several GCSE and A level courses, we have reduced the opening hours of the library. We have fundraised for all premises maintenance – desks, floors, chairs."

2. The high needs budget for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) needs to be increased by at least £1.5 billion per year

- One source of pressure on the high needs budget has been an increase in the number of pupils with statements of SEND or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), with an increase of over 50,000 (21%) between 2014 and 2017; 31,000 between 2016 and 2017 alone.
- Mainstream schools are required to meet the first £6,000 of support for a pupil with special educational needs from their existing budgets. Local authorities must meet costs beyond this and their budgets are also currently insufficient to meet demand. Research by the Local Government Association has found that councils have overspent their allocated budgets for children with SEND for the last four years.²

A governor in Hertfordshire told us "One pupil in my school requires 30 hours a week of one-to-one support in the classroom and during breaks. Every educational activity requires specially adapted resources. The additional funding we receive for this pupil is £3,800 a year. We can only support these pupils by diverting funding from other pupils. We have driven down contracts and maximised lettings. There is nowhere else we can save. If we get one more child with significant needs at my primary school, the finances and quality of education will fail. We have no slack left."

¹ F40. 2018. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2zyGyTy>

² LGA. 2018. Special needs support for children faces potential half a billion funding gap – new research. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2zsfHZm>

- 3. The rate for 16-19 pupils must be increased to at least £4,760 per year**
 - Research by the IFS found that funding per student 16-18 has seen the biggest squeeze of all stages of education over recent years. Since 2010-11, school sixth forms have faced budget cuts of 21% while further education and sixth-form funding per student has fallen by about 8%;
 - The proposed increase is based on research by London Economics, which found that an additional £760 per pupil per year would be needed in 2020/21 to continue providing a high quality education.³ The government has raised the school leaving age to 18 and spoken extensively about the importance of quality provision at this stage of education.

- 4. The pupil premium funding must be protected in real terms and included in the national funding formula, with reporting requirements retained**
 - Education Policy Institute found that children eligible for the pupil premium were, on average, 4.3 months behind their peers when they first started school and, by the time the cohort sat their GCSEs, the gap between pupil premium pupils and their peers had risen to 19.3 months.⁴
 - As part of its commitment to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, the government should commit to protecting the pupil premium in real terms through its inclusion in the national funding formula, while retaining reporting requirements to ensure strong focus on impact.

- 5. The government must review funding for early years so that all children have access to high quality, teacher led early education**
 - Many providers of the government's 30 years funded childcare report that they cannot deliver high quality early education within the budget provided. Currently, the 30 hours free childcare offer is targeted at working families, rather than the most disadvantaged children.
 - Just 22% of those governing schools with early years provision say that they receive sufficient funding to meet the needs of pupils in the early years.⁵ Unlike most other settings, schools and maintained nurseries employ qualified teachers.

- 6. The national funding formula must be implemented in full as soon as possible, with funding distributed directly to schools and trusts**
 - During the current transitional period, funding is distributed to local authorities which can then make limited variations to the amount received by individual schools. This means that there is still inequality between the funding received by schools in different parts of the country.

- 7. Funding settlements should be for a minimum of three years to enable schools to properly plan their budgets**
 - The Department for Education expects schools to plan budgets three to five years ahead and this is good practice as budgets should be linked to the governing board's strategy, which should look ahead for at least this timeframe. Currently, however, there is no information available about funding for 2021-22, leaving schools facing uncertainty.

³ London Economics. 2018. Understanding the funding shortfall in sixth form education: Final report for the Sixth Form Colleges Association. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2FM6OiX>

⁴ Andrews, Jon, et al. 2017. Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage. Available at: <https://goo.gl/gpywmB>

⁵ Holland, Fay. 2018. School governance in 2018: An annual survey by the National Governance Association in partnership with Tes. Available at: www.nga.org.uk/schoolgovernancein2018

A trustee of a multi academy trust in the South West told us “there is a need for consistent, medium term funding arrangements. As a MAT with 14 schools, it is very difficult to develop meaningful strategies for school improvement of capital spend, when funding is so hand to mouth.”

8. The government must make sufficient capital funding available to return all school buildings to satisfactory or better condition

- The Department for Education carried out a visual property data survey in 2014, which estimated that the total cost of returning all schools to satisfactory or better condition would be £6.7 billion, while a further £7.1 billion would be required to bring parts of school buildings from satisfactory to good condition.⁶
- Schools are expected to meet maintenance costs for their buildings through revenue funding. Among the governors and trustees who responded to NGA’s survey, 35% said that they had reduced spending on buildings and maintenance as a result of financial constraints and a further 25% anticipated doing so in the next two years.⁷

9. Local authority services for schools and children must be properly funded, as must children’s mental and physical health services, so that pupils come to school safe, well and equipped to learn

- Schools alone cannot solve all of the problems in pupils’ lives and well-funded services to support children and families are vital to schools’ ability to deliver high quality education.
- Schools are increasingly providing poverty-related services for their pupils’ families; 38% of respondents to NGA’s survey of school governors and trustees said that their school provides financial support with purchasing school uniforms, 5% provided help with washing of school uniforms, 4% provided help with meals outside of term time, 7% provided a food bank for families and 2% were providing emergency loans.⁸

For more information

Contact: Shelby Roberts, Policy Officer, NGA: shelby.roberts@nga.org.uk, 0121 237 3780

⁶ National Audit Office. 2017. Capital funding for schools. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2mbMFVI>

⁷ Holland, Fay. 2018. School governance in 2018: An annual survey by the National Governance Association in partnership with Tes. Available at: www.nga.org.uk/schoolgovernancein2018

⁸ Holland, Fay. 2018. School governance in 2018: An annual survey by the National Governance Association in partnership with Tes. Available at: www.nga.org.uk/schoolgovernancein2018