



April 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

You will all be aware of the year-on-year cuts to public funding that continue to affect all walks of life. Alongside other essential services education, over the past decade, has seen a real terms cut to the funding they receive.

The total spend on education in England is, as the government has stated, now at an all time high. However, the UK statistics network has scolded the government for headlines that mask the whole picture. Since 2010 the number of children in state funded schools has increased by 9% which, coupled with inflation, means that schools now only receive as much per pupil income in real terms as they did in 2009. This amounts to an 8% reduction in funding, the biggest funding cut for over 30 years.

Alongside the funding challenges faced within schools themselves, essential frontline children's services are also being reduced. Data from 'The Education Policy Institute' shows that other children's services such as early intervention, family services and youth services have all been cut by around 20% per child. This has a knock-on impact on schools who are now investing in supporting parents and children where there are gaps created by other reduced services. Schools are being expected to do significantly more, with more children, with significantly less.

These challenges are not simply affecting our local schools, they are common across the education system up and down the country. The 'Worth Less?' campaign has been set up to provide a united voice for fairer funding and now comprises 64 Local Authorities and Boroughs covering thousands of schools. In Oxfordshire the financial challenge for 2019 has increased still further as the Department for Education has agreed to the County Council's request to move 0.5% of funding from the schools funding block to the high needs funding block. On top of the ongoing national budget constraints, mainstream schools in Oxfordshire will therefore all receive 0.5% less funding for 2019/20 than in previous years.

Schools are committed to continuing to minimise the impact of reduced funding on the children in their care but are nonetheless faced with making difficult decisions in order to deal with the large, year on year, shortfall in funding. Since the biggest percentage of any school's budget is spent on staffing it is regrettably in this area that cuts may now need to be made. Staff and governors in all schools are reflecting carefully on the decisions that are needing to be made in order that all your children, whatever their level of ability or need, continue to receive the high-quality education to which they are entitled, delivered by committed and qualified staff.

If you feel able to do so we would encourage you to make representation regarding the financial situation in schools to Robert Courts MP, or directly to the Department for Education.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank parents/carers for their ongoing support and understanding in these most challenging of financial circumstances.

Yours sincerely

The headteachers of the Witney Partnership of Schools