



FARNBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Farnborough Hill, Farnborough, Orpington, Kent BR6 7EQ

Telephone 01689 853295 Fax 01689 889286

Email: admin.office@farnborough.bromley.sch.uk

Website: www.farnboroughprimary.co.uk

Miss A James BA PGCE Head Teacher

Mrs C Browne B.Ed Hons Head of School

21 June 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

Firstly, I would like to say a massive thank you to you all for the enormous amount of support you showed the school on Friday 7 June by attending the meetings regarding the financial position of Farnborough Primary School and completing the reply slips with your comments. The support and thoughts generated was overwhelming and already, with your help we have some really good ideas about how to support the school financially in the shorter and longer term.

As a result of the meetings and our letter to the families, we now have new members of our community who have stepped forward to continue our very successful PTA and possibly some new computers for the computer room.

Due to the contents of my letter, there were many questions and concerns, which we discussed at the meetings; however, understandably many of you were not able to attend, so therefore please find below an overview of what was discussed.

The contents of this letter and the meetings will be deliberated in more detail at our next local committee meeting and then with senior leaders of the NEST Multi Academy Trust. After that, we will have some actions which we will then share with you.

I understand that some of the ideas below may cause concern amongst some within the community, but please rest assured everything that you read below are merely suggestions from families who attended the meetings; **not** decisions.



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Areas discussed

School structure

<p>Why are we in a position whereby we find ourselves in financial difficulty?</p>	<p>Fundamentally, this is due to education funding cuts made by the government. Whilst all schools are facing financial losses, being a one form entry school with very little additional funding pots, such as deprivation, Pupil Premium, English as an Additional language our basic income is relatively low, but with the same outgoings as other schools.</p>
<p>Management cost of the school – why are there three members of staff out of class?</p>	<p>Head Teacher Role – Traditionally, even for a school this size, the Head Teacher role is non-class based. My role entails the strategic and operational oversight of the school to drive school standards and improvement. This is through creating school action and improvement plans, ensuring consistency and progress across the school by monitoring standards, lessons and books, supporting teachers and ensuring professional development for all staff. A key aspect of my role is ensuring the financial sustainability of our school. I have had teaching commitments this year and last, but this will increase next year.</p> <p>Head of School – This role is what traditionally would have been called the Deputy Head role. Mrs Browne has been based in year six this year, teaching daily intervention groups and also the whole class when Mr Atkinson has his weekly Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time. This arrangement has been in place for the past two years. She regularly teaches across Key Stage Two (years 3-6) and also leads whole school English, is the Pupil Premium Lead, Attendance Lead and is the school Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-coordinator (SENCO).</p> <p>Mrs Matthews has been supporting key stage one (years 1 and 2) by team teaching to ensure consistent standards, more support for the most able pupils and covering PPA whilst also mentoring the newly qualified teachers</p> <p>The above structure is not unusual for a school of our size</p>
<p>Why do we belong to a Multi academy Trust?</p>	<p>Historically, before Academies existed, schools and teachers were supported and gained invaluable professional development from Local Authorities who had fully staffed professional development centres. The cost of this to schools was approximately 10% of their income. As cuts were made to local governments these resources to schools were removed and provided by Academies. For our MAT we will pay a top slice of 5.5%.</p> <p>A multi-academy trust (MAT) is a single entity established to undertake a strategic collaboration to improve and maintain high educational standards across a number of schools. A group of schools form a single MAT which has overarching responsibility for their governance. The MAT is accountable for the performance of each school in the group, although each can still have their own governing body which operates subject to delegation of power from the MAT.</p> <p>MATs also encourage economies of scale in shared services such as finance and administration and the academies within the MAT can often negotiate preferable contracts and services, improving value for money</p>



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Can the Multi Academy Trust help us?	The MAT is fully aware of our situation and we are in constant communication with them. The financial cuts are affecting all schools in our MAT.
Could the school close?	No. The Department for Education (DfE) will re-broker academies to another MAT rather than close them. That is highly unlikely to happen in this situation.
Are other schools in the same position?	Despite Government claims that investment is adequate, all schools are facing similar issues and are unable to operate in the same manner they have previously. We are all receiving less income than in previous years and it is particularly hard for us because we are a small school and economies of scale work against us. All schools employ one Head Teacher, Deputy, caretaker, finance officer, admin officer, SENCO etc, therefore our outgoings for these staff takes a larger proportion of our income than that of a larger school. Our basic income based on our pupil numbers are: 811,356 (with the two bulge classes) Without these two classes our basic funding would be: 624,120 A two-form entry would be given approximately 1,248,240, hence why they are not facing the same amount of cuts this year.
Is this the right Trust for us?	Yes. We are part of an excellent and strong Multi-Academy Trust.
Can we see the accounts?	All accounts are available on the NEST website. These are audited annually and published a year behind the current year.



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Provision and Resources

SEND cuts – what will they actually be and how will this affect children?	We are an outstanding school that genuinely cares about every child that comes here. We all became teachers as we wanted to make a positive difference to every child no matter what their needs are. The cuts we are having to make are done so with a very heavy heart and not because we want to, but because we have very little choice. I have contacted the local authority about our financial constraints and they are coming to meet with myself and Mrs. Jones before we break up for the summer. The Local Authority are very aware that we are a school that tries to offer above and beyond for its SEND children; hence why they want to meet with us and explore options of support.
OFSTED look closely at SEND	Whilst we are inspected by OFSTED, this is not what motivates us as teachers. We try to offer the best to our children because we care about them and because we want them to have the best life chances they can possibly have. The lack of funding from central government makes this harder, but we will continue to strive to ensure high quality provision for all children.
Music, Sport and enrichment cuts – what does this mean for our children?	Unfortunately, financial cuts will mean that there is less money to release teachers to take part in sporting events. We will ensure that we continue to offer your children a varied and rounded education however, some of the extra opportunities that we have been able to historically provide such as the Bromley Youth Music Trust (BYMT) teaching the recorders and djembe drums across Key Stage Two will have to be cut
Will there still be staff in the Orchid Room?	The Orchid Room is an intervention room for children who have specific learning requirements. There will definitely be one member of staff working in the Orchid Room next year for three days a week. I am still trying to organise the staff in a way that we can still keep another member of staff in the Orchid Room for two days a week, but I will not be able to confirm this until September.



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Short Term solutions

<p>Ensure that the school make it much clearer that there is a voluntary contribution towards School Funds Maybe pay the contribution via Direct Debit</p>	<p>Thank you for bringing it to our attention that many families are not aware of the voluntary contribution. We will be sending out next year's letter very soon.</p>
<p>Increase Lettings including during the holidays and weekends</p>	<p>We discussed how the school did offer a holiday club last year, but there was not enough uptake and therefore the club was cancelled. The feedback at the meeting was that the hours that the club offered were not long enough for working parents. I have emailed some holiday camps to see if they would like to let out premises; however, this will probably not happen in time for this summer, but hopefully for the future. A strategy group might help us develop this further area further.</p>
<p>Source our own Uniform</p>	<p>Some schools source their own uniform rather than out source to external providers. This is an area worth investigating; however, we would need to be careful in not charging too much as school uniform is already expensive once you have bought all items on the list including: the uniform, forest school kit, PE kits, schools bags, hats and water bottles. Due to the restrictions on profit making, this would have to be looked into by the PTA.</p>
<p>Use local businesses – sponsorship, community support</p>	<p>Many families that were at the meeting suggested using businesses more. This is an area that we will discuss at Local Committee level; but as mentioned at the meeting, it is something we would need a working party for to further develop the idea.</p>
<p>Parental Helpers</p>	<p>We value help from Parental helpers. At the moment we have volunteers hearing children read and we will welcome any more help. Mrs Pugh will arrange a DBS check; once personal ID has been verified, the process only takes a few days.</p>
<p>Some businesses match fund charity funds, can this be done for the PTA?</p>	<p>The PTA will look into this, but this is a great idea for us to investigate further.</p>
<p>More fundraising events that don't cost much to run</p>	<p>Our new PTA Team met with me this week to discuss fundraising events for this year. We will be reviewing the success of previous events and will take this into account with future planning</p>



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Long Term Strategic Solution Ideas

Talk/Write to local MP and Councilors about the financial position of our school and the impact it is beginning to have	While this may not help financially, it will help to raise the issues that not only us but all other schools are facing at this time. Ultimately, the decisions that are affecting our school are made by politicians; they are probably unaware of just how much schools are becoming impacted due to the significant cuts that have been made over recent years.
*Ask the LA if becoming a 2 form entry is still an option for the school as more children will mean more income	Experience has demonstrated this is a highly emotive issue but one that maybe worth considering as a long term solution because as explained previously, the funding for schools does not account for economies of scale. A two-form entry school will result in more money to spend on each of our children than a one- form entry does. It is important to note that this option may not even be possible as the numbers of children in Bromley have declined over the past few years and look set to continue to drop. There is also the 'Green Belt' issue upon which the expansion was rejected; this issue remains.
*Adding a Nursery to the school or Specialist Provision	This could be an option, but we would have to undertake a financial assessment to see how much income this would generate. It would include reconfiguring the existing building and space and gauging the local community's feelings on this.

****The shaded boxes: These ideas would need to be explored by the school with NEST and the Local Authority. These are not decisions that can be made at school level.***

What could I do next?

- Support the school through the PTA events as funds are raised for enrichment activities within the school and much needed resources. Their first event is on Saturday 13th July from 11am – 2pm.
- Write to your local MPs and Councillors about the financial plight that our school and others face
- We will be setting up a working party in the Autumn Term to look at the business support element that many of you have brought up. We will write to you, inviting you to join this in early September.

Should you wish to discuss the contents of this letter with me please do not hesitate in making an appointment to see me. As stated earlier, there may be elements of this letter that cause concern, but please rest assured that the Farnborough Team will continue to strive to ensure the best outcomes for each and every child.

I am confident that with your support we will be able to find solutions to our short and longer-term financial difficulties. Thank you for your incredible support.

Yours Sincerely

Angela James



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