

20 April 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

School Funding - how is Millthorpe School affected?

We are sure that many of you will have noticed news items about school funding over the past year and may have wondered how this is affecting Millthorpe School.

By 2019/20, government funding per pupil will have stayed at the same level for five years. According to a National Audit Office report, rising staff and other costs means that schools will then have **8% less to spend in real terms**. For a school like Millthorpe, that is the equivalent of about **£350,000** per year. For example, **just these three** government introduced cost increases listed below have all been unfunded and represent an **annual** real-terms cut to Millthorpe's budget of 5%.

Unfunded (per annum)

- | | |
|---|----------|
| • three years of 1% pay rises | £127,000 |
| • increased employer pension contributions from 01/09/2015 | £56,000 |
| • increased employer National Insurance contributions from 01/04/2016 | £78,000 |

Teaching and learning will always remain our number one priority but the scale of these cuts means that we have had to make some hard choices:

- like many schools in York, we have had to increase class sizes;
- we are admitting eight additional students in Year 7 this year in order to gain extra income, although government funding for these will not reach us until September 2019;
- we have had to cut our Awards Evening held at York Racecourse due to the cost, although we have plans to bring it in-house at a reduced scale;
- we have had to do without four Lead Teacher posts (two-year temporary positions for some of our outstanding teachers to pass on their skills to other colleagues);
- we have ceased all Year 10 and Year 11 vocational courses (which we paid for via external providers) as we can no longer justify the extra expense;
- when some colleagues have left our employment, we have managed without replacing them - for example, we have not replaced our Communications Officer, reducing the frequency and quality of our communications with you.

In all of these savings, our key aim has been to protect what happens in the classroom. We have maintained a broad and balanced curriculum and, in particular, have ensured all children have access to the Arts. We have made every efficiency saving possible and we continue to work hard

to get the best value for money in everything that we do. We are very grateful to staff, who have made sure their resources stretch as far as possible. We have prioritised the provision of quality staff above all other things.

You may have heard that the government has reformed school funding to make it fairer: schools in York will receive an increase, including Millthorpe. This increase still leaves York the worst funded local authority in England. Millthorpe's increases of 2.9% in 2018/19 and 2.7% in 2019/20 do not even compensate for four years of increased staff costs at 1% per year.

When we became an academy, we said that we hoped for access to improved funding for our buildings, and we have been successful in securing this from a fund not available to local authority schools. We have received £1.9 million to refurbish roofs and windows - the work that is taking place currently in school. The disruption caused by all this building work is very challenging but I have been overwhelmed by how well everyone in the school has responded, in particular our students, who have shown exceptional resilience and forbearance. When it is finished, there will be a warm and dry quad in B block, nineteen classrooms will have new double-glazed windows keeping them warm, and there will be new roofs on the Dining Hall, Sports Hall, Gym, Language Lab and B1. We have also been successful in a second round of bidding and gained over £900,000 to replace the roofs on A Block, C Block, D block and the Library. None of this money can fix the day-to-day funding shortfalls above, but will make our school a safer, warmer and drier site, and a more pleasant place in which to work and learn.

You may be able to detect our frustration as we write to you. Senior Leaders and Governors have to spend more time finding ever-smaller efficiencies rather than focusing on improvements these days. We are not asking for sympathy; we understand that many public and private sector organisations are also finding times hard. However, we do hope you may understand better that we have had to cut back on some things because of the relentless reductions in our real terms income over the last few years.

If you are interested in reading more about the national picture, there are some links below to articles about this. Our local MP, Rachael Maskell, has raised the issue of school funding in Parliament previously and I urge you to write to her, or to the new Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds, if you wish to express your concerns on this.

Yours faithfully



Trevor Burton
Executive Headteacher



Bill Schofield
Chair of Governing Body

Web links about school funding

[School Cuts](#) - Teacher Union website calculating the impact of funding problems

[FullFact](#) - fact checking that per pupil funding will fall by 8% by 2020 in real terms (24 02 2017)

[The Independent newspaper](#) reports that secondary school staff numbers are falling as pupil numbers rise (07 02 2018)

[The York Mix](#) reports on how York schools have been affected (07 02 2018)

[Education Policy Institute](#) on School Funding which reveals that ¼ of secondary schools are in deficit and 2/3 are spending more than their income (16 03 2018)

[ASCL](#) (secondary headteachers' union) comments on the Education Policy Institute Report on school funding (16 03 2018)