

June 2025

The Reality of School Funding

Dear Parents and Families,

I am writing to share the difficult reality of how government decisions are affecting schools across the country, including those in our Trust. Many of you may have already noticed changes in your child's school—such as shared headteachers, mixed-age classes, fewer support staff, or reduced office hours. Some of these changes happened last year, and others will take place in September. Unfortunately, more changes may be needed in the future.

Why Are These Changes Happening?

School funding has always been a challenge, but this year we are facing real cuts. Below are some of the key financial pressures we are dealing with. These costs are either not funded at all or not funded enough:

- **Teacher pay increases:** £206,615 taken from school budgets. Despite media reports, only 1.7% rather than 3% of the cost is funded because it is based on per pupil rather than per staff calculations.
- **Support staff pay increases:** £212,311 from school budgets. Only 0.9% of the 3.2% increase is funded.
- **Teacher pension increases:** £50,000 from school budgets. This is funded per pupil and small schools and primary schools have fewer pupils.
- **Support staff pension increases:** £227,873 from school budgets. We receive no funding for this.
- **National Insurance increases:** £76,000 underfunded. Only 78% of the increase was funded.
- **General Annual Grant:** £200,000 reduction. Our schools no longer benefit from the minimum funding guarantee.
- **Regional funding gap:** Children in the South West receive over £5,000 less per pupil than those in London.
- **Falling birth rates:** Some schools have lost up to 48% of their funding due to fewer pupils.
- **Inflation:** Rising costs across all areas.

These pressures mean that more of our budget must be spent on unavoidable costs, leaving less for staff and resources. Since staffing makes up around 75% of a school's budget, this is where many of the changes are being made.

Does Being Part of a Trust Help?

Yes, it does. Being part of our school Trust family gives our schools greater financial security, especially for small and rural schools. As a Trust, we share resources and support each other. Here are some of the benefits:

- **Safe and well-maintained buildings** through shared estates and maintenance support.
- **Reliable IT equipment and software** to help teachers plan and deliver lessons.
- **High-quality phonics training and resources** to support early reading.
- **Curriculum resources** for all subjects.
- **Excellent Early Years equipment** for a strong start in learning.
- **Support for school leaders**, allowing them to focus on children, not admin.
- **SEND support**, including tools to help identify and support children's needs.
- **Professional development** for teachers, sharing expertise across schools.
- **Additional income**: Our finance team has raised nearly £1.3 million in grants and extra funding this year.
- **Cost savings**: We've saved nearly £300,000 on energy over three years.
- **Sustainability support** to meet government net zero targets and reduce costs.

The expertise of the support teams mean that school leaders and teachers can focus on what matters most—your children.

What Can Be Done?

As Trust Lead, I am writing to and meeting with Members of Parliament. As part of a group of school leaders we are contacting the Education Secretary to raise these concerns. You may also wish to contact your local MP to share your views on school funding.

We understand that the country is facing tough economic times. Sadly, we do not expect this to be a short-term issue. The Trust Board, school leaders, and I believe things may get even harder in the coming years.



I want to reassure you that your Headteachers are making difficult decisions with great care and always with your child's best interests at heart. Things may look different now and, in the future, sadly these changes are happening across the country.

If you would like to know more, please speak to your child's Headteacher. They can explain how funding challenges are affecting your child's school and how being part of a Trust helps. School leaders value the incredible support that parents and families provide and on behalf of our Heads, I would like to thank you for your continued support in these difficult times.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracey Cleverly".

Tracey Cleverly

Trust Lead

The Learning Academy Partnership