

School Funding in Learning Community 2 Schools - Leighton Buzzard, Totternhoe and Woburn Area

This letter is to highlight funding concerns across our school community and to urge you to contact Andrew Selous, the Member of Parliament for South West Bedfordshire and ask him to put pressure on the relevant ministers to increase the budget for education.
andrew.selous.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am sure you are already aware through reports in the media about the increasing pressure on school budgets. In Leighton Buzzard/Totternhoe/Woburn area we are no exception, and over recent years most schools have seen their small reserves dwindle to nothing whilst balancing the budget becomes ever more challenging. Added to this have been statutory increases to our outgoings, such as the teacher pay award, the NJC pay award for support staff and the associated increases in pension and National Insurance costs. Finally, in the current financial year many Central Bedfordshire schools have received a reduced AWPU (per pupil funding which is the school's main source of revenue). This has meant that previously affordable staffing costs have dramatically increased, with no increase in school funding to cover them.

Already most schools in the town have looked to reduce their expenditure wherever possible – contracts are always regularly reviewed to achieve best value, and schools are collaborating to buy supplies in bulk to save money. There is little to no money available for capital improvements such as fixing ceilings, upgrading lighting or buying new ICT – funding for these items usually has to be obtained through grants. Resourcing the curriculum is requiring more creativity every year – often classroom essentials such as glue sticks and pencils are bought in September and not again for the rest of the year. Increasingly we hear about schools where there are no support staff at all, or where the office is closed at certain periods during the day, and schools across the country are considering or moving to Friday afternoon closure to save money. Several schools in the town have had to make staffing cuts this year in order to balance their budget – and these are changes to provision which are entirely driven by the need to save money, not because school leaders believe that these changes are necessary, or in the best interests of the children's education. A Level subjects are being withdrawn if there are insufficient students to make them financially viable potentially requiring students to travel outside Leighton Buzzard if they wish to pursue them.

This ongoing lack of funding will impact the education your child receives in the short and medium term, and consequently have implications for their longer term prospects. Unless greater funding is provided, schools will be forced to pare their provision back still further – directly impacting the experience of your child as they move through education.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Clarke

Head Teacher of Greenleas Lower School, on behalf of Learning Community 2 Schools:

Aspley Guise Lower School
Beaudesert Lower School
Clipstone Brook Lower School
Doverly Down Lower School
Greenleas School
Heathwood Lower School
Hockliffe Lower School
Husborne Crawley Lower School
Leedon Lower School
Linslade Lower School

Pulford Lower School
Ridgmont Lower School
Southcott Lower School
Rushmere Park Academy
St Leonard's CE Academy
Stanbridge Lower School
Swallowfield Lower School
Mary Bassett Lower School
Totternhoe CE Academy
Woburn Lower School

Brooklands School
Fulbrook Middle School
Gilbert Ingfield Academy
Linslade School
Cedars Upper School
Vandyke Upper School
Oak Bank School