

## **School Funding Issues - Letter to RCFS Parents**

Most people, especially those with children in education, must now be aware of the very pressing issues surrounding the level of funding for schools. In particular, the failure of the funding provided to match the increasing needs. The reasons for growing gap between what is required and what is provided by government have been widely broadcast, but I have no qualms about sharing them with you again.

- Since 2010 school budgets have been reduced in real terms by 8%
- Nationally class sizes are rising but funding has not kept pace.
- Schools are expected to offer further support for children's emotional health and well-being, without any additional resources being made available.
- Cuts to Public Sector funding have impacted on the support for vulnerable children from disadvantaged backgrounds or with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Schools are now expected to step in and fill this gap.

None of this information is new or surprising. What is new, and surprising, is that head teachers across the country are becoming actively engaged as a group in campaigning for an end to this steady erosion of the educational provision that families and children deserve. The latest manifestation of the campaign is a letter to parents, being sent by individual head-teachers, describing the issues and their failed attempts so far to engage the DfE in any meaningful debate. This is the letter that you will receive from the Head-teacher at RCFS.

It is not unusual to read about school funding issues in terms of news items about head-teachers working in the school canteen, classroom staff cleaning toilets, schools closing on Friday afternoons and parents being asked to buy teaching supplies. These activities are not widely practiced across the country and certainly not in RCFS. However, it is very easy to understand why, when faced with problems which threaten their ability to do what is best for the children, teachers should be driven to such extremes. All schools have been, or will be, affected by the funding shortfall but not all schools are affected to the same extent.

The Leadership Team and Governors at RCFS are very aware of the threats from any funding shortfalls. We have, after all, been coping with these issues for many years and, with the spiritual and financial help of our eponymous founder, we have managed the situation so far. The governors are totally supportive of the analysis presented in the Head-teacher's letter but thought that it painted a too extreme picture, specifically for RCFS, and risks causing unnecessary alarm among our parent community. Hence I agreed to write this letter to reassure you that, whilst we agree with the premise that school funding requires major attention from the DfE, we are far from planning any drastic measures. Your children's well-being and safety are in good hands and they will continue to receive an excellent learning experience from the amazing teachers at RCFS.

**John Hough – Chair of Governors, The Richard Clarke First School, Abbots Bromley**