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Farmor's School
AN ACADEMY

9th July 2015

Dear Parents

Further to my letter last week about school funding, I would like to express my gratitude for the support of parents, both in terms of petitioning MPs and for the very generous donations. Thank you sincerely.

In talking to parents, certain questions have arisen and comments have been made which I would like to take the opportunity to address. Some parents have also asked for more information which I am able to provide.

Many parents have expressed sympathy and sadness that the school is in a financially difficult position. I would like to emphasise that, whilst the school's funding is extremely challenging, we are balancing the books and we will continue to find creative ways of protecting the quality of education we provide. Your children are in safe hands. In fact, I am very optimistic about continuing to improve the school despite these difficulties. There is a strong sense of momentum and direction in the school, and we remain a warm, friendly and supportive place to study and work. Please be assured that our core values and success will not be diluted.

A question raised by some parents is whether the financial difficulties are linked to our Academy status. I can categorically say that we would be in a much worse position had we not become an Academy. We have been awarded funding for many building projects which we would not have been able to bid for as a local authority school, including the Sixth Form LRC and refurbished toilets. These are one-off funds which can only be used for specific building projects so do not resolve our long-term funding issues, but they have significantly improved the fabric of the school.

In order to lobby MPs, I have been asked for some factual information about the gap between funding in Gloucestershire and other authorities. Gloucestershire are 131st of 150 local authorities, meaning we are in the bottom 20 for funding. Recent research by the union ASCL concluded the following:

"Schools in the 10 best-funded areas will on average receive grants of £6,297 per pupil in 2015-16, compared to an average of £4,208 per pupil in the 10 most poorly funded areas.

For a typical secondary school of 920 students, this equates to a budget of £5.8 million in the best-funded areas and £3.9 million in the most poorly funded – a difference of £1.9 million."

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Gloucestershire is a member of the f40 group, a coalition of the 40 worst funded authorities who lobby for fairer funding. There is a parent fact-sheet which provides information about how and who to contact to lend support to the campaign (<http://www.f40.org.uk/campaign-resources>).

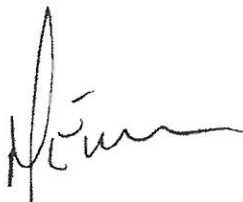
Finally, parents have asked how else they can support the school. There are two very constructive ways parents can help:

1. By playing an active role in the Friends of Farmor's School (FOFS) who are invaluable in helping raise funds for school projects. Details of how to get involved are on our website.
2. By generating positive word-of-mouth about the school so that we recruit full year groups and secure future income. If you are happy with the education provided by the school then please tell other people who may be looking at schools for their children.

I have received a reply to my letter to Mr Clifton-Brown MP who assures me that he is actively engaging with the process underway at the House of Commons and the work of the f40 group. Hopefully he will represent our strength of feeling on this matter.

Thank you again for your support. I hope you have an enjoyable and relaxing summer and we look forward to welcoming students back in the new school year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Evans
Headteacher