



Ember
Learning Trust
Five schools, one aim

31st January 2018

Dear Parents

We are writing to you as headteachers and governors of the schools within the Ember Learning Trust to keep you informed of the financial situation of our schools - and of many others outside our Trust. We want to ensure that we provide an education of the highest possible standard for your children, but we need to be properly funded to enable us to do so.

At a recent meeting we shared information about our draft budgets, which have just been submitted to Surrey CC; all of our schools are showing an in-year deficit for 2018-19, ranging from £25,000 to £110,000; in the past we have been able to set a deficit because we have had reserves to draw upon, but as these have reduced, it is no longer possible and some tough decisions may need to be made. We want to avoid adversely affecting the education of the pupils at our schools, but redundancies or alteration to the length of the school day are real possibilities and have happened in schools in other parts of the country. All of us are relying increasingly upon contributions from parents, either through monthly contributions or money raised by Parent-Teacher Associations and we would like to thank parents for their generosity; where these once funded additional resources or equipment, they are now used to pay for necessities.

In recent years, funding for schools has remained relatively flat, but costs have continued to increase for the following reasons:

- Staff costs have grown over the last five years as a result of:
 - Unfunded pay awards – although teachers' salaries have only increased by 1% per year from 2012 to 2017, schools have not been funded to pay these. With the removal of the pay cap for the public sector, it is anticipated that pay awards will increase to 2% in 2018.
 - Increases in employers' National Insurance contributions of 2.4% in 2014.
 - Increases in employers' pension contribution of 2.0% in 2015
- The removal of the Educational Services Grant announced in 2015, but only fully implemented in 2018-19 costing an average primary school £25,000.
- A reduction in external support provided for schools so that an increasing number of services that were previously provided by Surrey CC now have to be paid for by schools.

According to the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies, schools will have faced a real terms cut of 4.6% between 2015 and 2019, despite additional money being moved to the schools budget from elsewhere in education earlier in the year. The government is introducing a National Funding Formula, which we hope will have a positive impact in the future, but transition arrangements do not help us in the short and medium term.

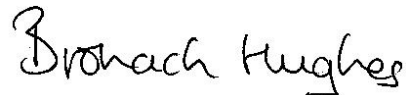
We will continue to do the very best for our pupils and won't lower our expectations; we are determined to offer a high quality education and to give pupils the education they deserve.

We wish to be apolitical in our approach, but we feel it would be a dereliction of our duty not to inform parents of the financial issues that are affecting our local schools and we would urge you to do everything you can to influence local MPs to ensure our schools are properly funded, so that your children get the education they deserve.

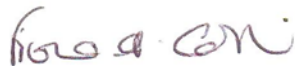
Yours faithfully



Nick Fry
Headteacher
Thames Ditton Junior School



Bronach Hughes
Chair of Governors
Thames Ditton Junior School



Fiona Collins
Headteacher
Hinchley Wood Primary School



Sue Rodgers
Chair of Governors
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Monica Paines
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Long Ditton Infant and Nursery School




Lis Braybrook
Chair of Governors
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Rebecca Hicks
Headteacher
Thames Ditton Infant School



Bruce Perry
On behalf of the governors of Thames
Ditton Infant School



Alison Bateman
Headteacher
Long Ditton St Mary's C of E Junior School



Ruth Merry / Rachel Cook
Co-Chairs of Governors
Long Ditton St Mary's C of E Junior School

