



Bishop Vesey's Grammar School

'Inspiration and Excellence'

Headteacher: Dominic Robson BA (Hons) NPQH

DGR/sw

03 February 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

Currently government plans for a national funding formula penalise Midlands' grammar schools, including Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, with a 2.9% cut in funding. This is in addition to other considerable challenges facing all schools, but particularly grammar schools. I am keen to ensure that government is well informed regarding the negative impact of current proposals for national funding formula. If any parents would be happy to respond to the consultation document on funding, please visit <https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2>. For all interested in responding I attach a suggested response from the Grammar Schools Headteacher Association.

We have run a number of excellent academic enrichment trips this week. Year 7 have been at Symphony Hall to hear the wonderful City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and their inspirational new conductor, **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyl**. Meanwhile, Year 8 had an Art trip to the Natural History Museum and Pitt-Rivers museum in Oxford. You can see some good photos of this on our Twitter feed @BVGs1527 and the school website. Thank you to all the staff organising these two trips.

We have also had House competitions in Debating and Maths this week and the UKMT Maths Challenge for Years 9 and 10. Well done to all taking part.

A big well done to **Nickeal Sidhu and Sophie Lloyd**, who both took part in the Cambridge Union Schools Debating competition on Sunday at Solihull School. They achieved 2nd, 3rd and 4th positions respectively in the three rounds of this very challenging contest.

Elsewhere, this week, there was another fine win, 8-3, by the chess 'invincibles' against KES Edgbaston. Another group of 'invincibles' were our netball girls, who for the second year running became U19 regional champions and thus progress to the National Finals for the third year running. An incredible achievement. Well done to Mrs Clarke and all the girls (see below) as well, of course, as all the amazing parents and supporters in the cold and wet conditions of Bromsgrove School last Sunday.



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This afternoon we have a big rugby match with BVGS U15s taking on Sir Thomas Rich School, Gloucester, in the Nat West Plate Quarter Final. We hope the rain, wind and very muddy pitch will work to our advantage!!

We are delighted that of our 4 nominations for the Sutton Coldfield Sports Award 2016 that Hamish Carter was successful. Well done 'Junior Male Sports Person of the Year!' For more information about all things BVGS Sport please visit : <http://www.bvgssport.co.uk/>

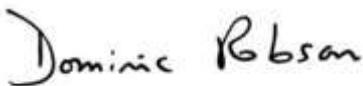
A reminder that proof orders for for the sports/music/officers/Find Me photographs can be collected from Mrs Foster in the School Club Office. All orders need to be back to Mrs Foster by Friday 17 February. (s.foster@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk) The school are also collecting Sainsbury's Active Kids vouchers. If you do have some, please take them to Mrs Foster in the School Club Office.

All parents should have received a letter reminding you that our whole school Academic Review Day is scheduled on Monday 13 February. Normal lessons are suspended on that day and all students are invited into school for an Academic Review Meeting. Please could you make sure that you return your permission slips as soon as possible. This is a great opportunity for students to take stock of their current progress and to set themselves targets for improvement. Parents are encouraged to attend where possible. Please also note that this is a normal school day from an attendance point of view, so if your son or daughter is ill on that day, you still need to call or email the school.

Well done to this week's top merit winners: **Zachary Deakin 7B, Arnaldo So 7R, Lucas Nix 7W, Alistair Kitchin 8B, Stephen Huxley 8P, Chirag Guha 8W, Jack Glover 9G, Ben Wall 10B, Matthew Kemp 10R, Elliott Brown 10W, Josh Harris 11B, Joao Cariata 11B and Ali Lakhnupal 11G.** I look forward to seeing them for hot chocolate and cookies on Thursday February 9th in my office.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely

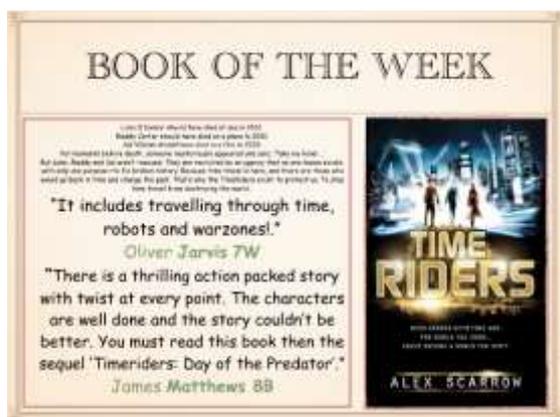


Dominic Robson
Headteacher



John Craggs DL BSc PhD HonDUniv FCMA
Chairman of Governors

Book of the Week



Art Stars of the Week



Zachary Farmer 11B. Zachary has just completed his art coursework, which became an investigation into identity and visual expressions through tattoo. Zach's work is exceptional, his attention to detail being of a very high standard. His final response, is based on skills and the artwork of Jade Chanel P. Well done Zach, your effort and skill make you a very worthy star of the week

Quote of the Week: Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one.
Hans Selye

Letters issued this week:

[Year 8 World Challenge Parents' Presentation Letter](#)

Dates for your Diary

Spring Term 2017

Monday 6 February	Year 10/11 Art Trip to Coventry
Thursday 9 February	AS Geography Field Trip
Monday 13 February	Review Day
Friday 17-24 February	Ski Trip
Friday 17 February	Break up for Half Term
Monday 27 February	Spring Term recommences
Monday 27 February	Y13 Articulation Prize Regional Heat at Ikon Gallery
Tuesday 28 February	Elevate Y10 Parents' Evening 18:00 - 19:15
Thursday 2 March	Author visit from Richy K Chandler
Thursday 2 March	Non-uniform Day for 'Book Aid' - WBD charity
Thursday 2 March	Y9 Parents' Evening 16:00 - 19:00
Tuesday 7 March	Higher Education Evening 19:00 - 20:00
Wednesday 8 March	Swimming Gala 13:30 Wyndley
Thursday 9 March	New Year 7 Open Morning
Monday 13 - 15 March	Geology Trip
Wednesday 15 March	Year 8 Parents' Evening 16:00 - 19:00
Tuesday 21 March	World Poetry Day
Thursday 23 March	Spring Concert
Friday 24 March	Non-uniform Day for 'Red Nose Day'
Friday 31 March	Duke of Edinburgh Expedition Weekend
Thursday 6 April	Break up for Easter at 15:25
Friday 7 April	Staff Training Day

Summer Term 2017

Monday 24 April	Summer Term commences
Tuesday 25 April	Y7 Parents' Evening 16:00 - 19:00
Thursday 27 April	Senior Soloists' Concert 19:00
Monday 1 May	May Day Holiday
Friday 5 May	Annual Sports Dinner
Thursday 18 May	Parents' SDP Forum 19:00
Friday 26 May	Break up for Half Term
Monday 5 June	Summer Term recommences
Friday 9 June	Golf Day
Tuesday 27 June	Open Evening 16:00 - 19:00
Tuesday 4 July	Performance Evening 19:00 - 20:30
Friday 21 July	Break up for Summer Holidays

Responding to the Schools National Funding Formula Stage Two

Consultation ends: 22 March 2017. The consultation document can be found at the following link:

https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-fundingformula2/supporting_documents/NFF_Stage2_schools_consultationdoc.pdf

There are 14 questions, all listed on page 43-44. The crucial questions are Q's 1, 4, 5, and 14. In the online response form. All questions have a box for comments as well as open boxes to click on -some are Y/N whilst others contain several options.

Commentary on the consultation questions

Below are some of the key issues you might like to highlight. As always it is best to use your own words where possible, as they give less weight to lots of responses which say exactly the same thing.

Q1. In designing our national funding formula, we have taken careful steps to balance the principles of fairness and stability. Do you think we have struck the right balance?

It is a definite **No** and I recommend going in hard here. The proposed NFF fails to achieve fair funding. It fails to ensure all schools receive the viability minimum to deliver core provision. It fails to reduce unjustifiable differentials between schools and geographical areas. Under the proposed National Funding Formula around 400 secondary schools will be funded below sustainable levels. All these schools face the same challenge: how to provide a core curriculum and cover normal running costs with insufficient funds. There is an urgent need to ensure all schools receive a minimum per pupil funding amount and for secondary schools £4800 is considered viable.

Q2. Do you support our proposal to set the primary to secondary ratio in line with the current national average of 1:1.29, which means that pupils in the secondary phase are funded overall 29% higher than pupils in the primary phase?

Different schools may have different views here, but I think it is about right so would be inclined to say yes and not detract from our main concerns.

Q3. Do you support our proposal to maximise pupil-led funding, so that more funding is allocated to factors that relate directly to pupils and their characteristics?

Again you may have different views but I would say yes. The bulk of the non-pupil-led funding goes into the lump sum.

Q4. Within the total pupil-led funding, do you support our proposal to increase the proportion allocated to the additional needs factors (deprivation, low prior attainment and English as an additional language)?

Absolutely NO!

The fundamental problem is the proposal to reduce basic per pupil funding from 76.6% to 72.5%, whereas it needs to increase to at least 80%. Equally the proposals to increase low prior attainment and deprivation funding are not justified by impact evidence. Further this funding will not all be directed at these areas: schools will have to use some of it to provide core school provision. Schools in receipt of little such funding will have to reduce their curriculum and still some of these will be judged by auditors to no longer be financially secure or viable.

Two key points to make are:

The proposed basic per pupil values of £3797 (KS3) and £4312 (KS4), are below the current AWPU values used by virtually all LAs and well below the DfE's 15-16 indicative values of £3950 and £4502.

Most of the lowest funded LAs set AWPU figures above these because they recognised that they must to ensure all schools can cover core costs.

Q5. Do you agree with the proposed weightings for each of the additional needs factors?

There are several parts to this critical question. The first is about pupil based deprivation which is proposed at 5.5%. (with 3.9% for area based deprivation). Click the 'allocate a lower proportion option'. The first point to make is that the decision to increase deprivation funding from 7.6% to 9.3% is mystifying (you might want to use a stronger word). There was a clear expectation that it would reduce, as the stated government intention was that Pupil Premium would become the main means of funding deprivation. There is clear evidence that it is currently only as high as it is (7.6%) because many LAs have not adjusted their formulae to reflect Pupil Premium due to their tendency to try to maintain historic funding formula levels and the constraints of the current minimum funding guarantee. The Audit Commission report found that PP funding was having little impact, despite the requirement for schools to account for its expenditure. What evidence is there that increasing deprivation funding will have any impact on attainment?

The proposal to allocate £785 to FSM 6 pupils is double funding exactly the same pupils as the PP and contradicts previously stated government policy. The additional £440 proposed for current FSM pupils is justified, as it is intended to cover the actual meal costs.

The second part is about the proposed 3.9% area based deprivation which will be allocated on IDACI. Schools may have different views here and either opt for agreeing the proportion is 'about right' or opt for a lower proportion. It is the best way they have come up with to reflect the needs of 'JAMS' and is not direct double funding of PP. If you opt for 'about right' add the caveat that only if the pupil based % is drastically reduced so that overall deprivation funding is less than the current 7.6% as was the original intention when pupil premium was introduced.

The third part is about the proposed massive increase in low prior attainment funding. Click the 'allocate a lower proportion option'. There is no evidence to justify increasing the low prior attainment funding from 4.3% to 7.5% and £1550 per pupil. In fact, evidence shows that expensive approaches, such as smaller class size and extra adults permanently in the classroom, fail to improve outcomes. Effective approaches such as short term intensive catch up support can be delivered for well under £1000pp. Part of the argument is that this also reflects that schools have to meet the first £6000 of additional support needed for SEND pupils and this often correlates with low prior attainment. Therefore, it is worth adding that, schools, including selective ones have SEND pupils with ASD, dyslexia and a range of disabilities who do not have LPA. Consequently, it would be much fairer if at least some of the funding within the LPA factor, intended to support SEND pupils, was moved to the basic per-pupil funding.

The final part is about EAL. The proposal here is to increase total funding from 0.9% to 1.2% with, as now, 3/4s of this spent in the primary sector where the large majority of EAL pupils are. In this case the reasons for increase - some LAs not funding it or for less than the normal 3 years - seem sound and therefore you may well feel the 'proportion is about right'.

