

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNING BODY 2022-23

Little Gaddesden Church of England Primary School

Teamwork

Teamwork is a vital part of school life. The children are taught to work collaboratively, to play together, to help each other and to achieve great things, combining their talents to greater effect. The sense of community is a wonderful aspect of life at Little Gaddesden School and one of which we are, justifiably, very proud. The involvement in events in the village and the surrounding area brings vital lessons to the children, broadening their experiences, as well as giving back to the community we serve. Obviously, their individual progress and achievements are the focus of so much hard work, ensuring that all children make the best progress they can, moving up through the school and preparing them for the next stage of their education journey.

Nowhere is the sense of teamwork more ably demonstrated than amongst the staff at the school. We are incredibly fortunate to have talented, dedicated and hardworking members of our teaching and support staff, individually achieving great things, and collectively ensuring the very best for the children and for the school community. We are very grateful to every member of staff for their hard work and dedication, and for their willingness to continually strive to improve, enhancing their own capabilities through professional development. We are also hugely grateful to Mrs Elkes, whose leadership of the school, support for the staff and determination to deliver the best education and experiences for the children make her an exemplary head and such an asset to the school community.

Teamwork is also vital in the role of the governing body. We work together, bringing differing but complementary talents and abilities, focussed on the good of the school and of the children. Whether in smaller groups, in our whole governing body meetings, individually visiting the school, or joining to help on school trips, governors work to ensure that the quality of education and the care for the children is paramount. In governing body meetings, we share our experiences of our time in school, ensuring that all governors have a balanced, clear view of the work of the school.

Results

The school's Key Stage 2 results were published in July and showed improved outcomes across all subjects, compared to the previous year. Our results also again exceeded both local and national levels. The governors congratulate pupils for their hard work and success, as well as thanking all staff, who have made such an enormous contribution to this success.

OFSTED inspection

Following changes at OFSTED, schools such as ours, judged Outstanding at the last inspection, are once more to be inspected. We anticipate that this will take place at some point over the coming six months, and the staff and governors are preparing for this to take place at short notice.

It has been apparent that far fewer schools are rated outstanding, following changes to the criteria and focus of inspections, with some 80% of those previously rated Outstanding being rated as Good.

There is more emphasis on the intent, implementation and impact of the school's curriculum, and you can find information about ours on the website.

School finances

In common with all schools, Little Gaddesden School's finances are under pressure. Inflation obviously affects many of the school's costs and has not been matched by government funding. Consequently, the school are continuing to be rigorous in achieving value for money across all spending. We will not know the funding for 2024-25, which runs from April 2024 to March 2025, until next spring, and the school will then set the budget in May next year.

The funding for next year is set based on pupil numbers this October. The following section addresses the way in which 'funding follows pupils'.

The outturn for the most recent complete year, 2022-23, is as shown in the data and the pie chart opposite. In addition to reviewing the school's finances every half term, governors compare our finances with those of comparable local schools, to ensure that our finances are well run and achieve the best outcome for our pupils in relation to funds spent.

Funding follows pupils

All schools experience a certain amount of fluctuation in their pupil numbers within the year and from one year to the next. This can be for a number of reasons, for example as families relocate to a new area or perhaps opt for a different educational path for their children. Little Gaddesden School is no different to any other school in this respect. However, for small schools in particular, this can have a significant impact on their budgets, due to the way that 'funding follows the child'. In very broad terms, Little Gaddesden School receives a 'lump-sum' of around £195,000 each year. It also receives funding of about £3,500 for every pupil on roll in October. So, if we assume the school is full to capacity at 105 pupils, the pupil funding received is £370,000. Conversely, if total pupil numbers dip to 95, the pupil funding falls to £333,000. Overall, this is a difference of some £37,000, funding that could pay for a member of staff for the year. For any school, the ability to forecast pupil numbers for the year ahead is fundamental. We need to plan staffing effectively, and early information is key. If, for any reason, you are thinking of changing school for your child, please do talk to Lorna Elkes as early as possible. It's much easier to plan ahead on the basis of possible changes; the school can get in touch with pupils on its waiting list if sufficient notice is given.

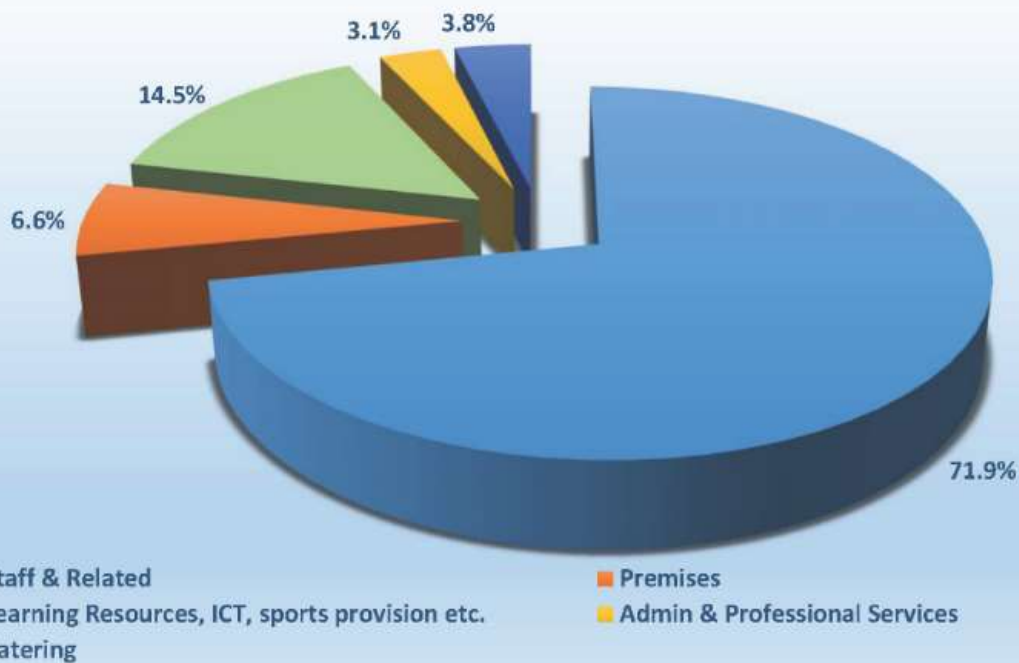
New playground equipment

This year saw the long-awaited playground equipment installed and in use. This major project has been the focus of a huge amount of consultation and work by Lorna Elkes and school staff, including deciding specifications and obtaining quotes from a number of potential suppliers. The funding was largely raised by the Friends of the School, including parents and members of the wider school and village community, all of whom have been involved in fundraising over the past few years in readiness for this project. Anyone who has seen the equipment in use will have seen the pleasure it is giving to all pupils.



2022-23 FINAL BUDGET POSITION

Budget Area	Budget 2022-23	Actual Spend 2022-23	% of total expenditure
Staff & Related	£475,749	£494,378	71.9%
Premises	£51,873	£45,641	6.6%
Learning Resources, ICT, sports provision etc.	£74,969	£99,965	14.5%
<i>Comprising:</i>			
Learning Resources	£23,803	£25,084	3.6%
Playground equipment	£22,819	£27,687	4.0%
ICT	£11,003	£27,236	4.0%
Professional Services (Curriculum)	£17,344	£19,958	2.9%
Admin & Professional Services	£17,675	£21,410	3.1%
Catering	£28,809	£26,249	3.8%
Total Expenditure	£649,075	£687,643	100.0%
Revenue Income	£618,059	£669,432	
Committed Revenue Balances (incl unspent Sports Premium)	£25,787		
Uncommitted Revenue Balances (Reserves)	£61,108	£68,684	
<i>Reserves as % of Total Income</i>	10%	10%	



Governors

Governors provide vital support to the school, as well as setting the framework and standards which the school is expected to achieve. We work collaboratively with the school leaders and staff, as well as holding the school to account. We act as critical friends in this role.

The three core functions of a governing body are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff;
- Overseeing financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

All governors are volunteers, collectively making up the largest volunteer force in the country. Whilst being voluntary, the role requires dedication and commitment, and a strong sense of what is in the best interests of the children.

We said goodbye to three governors at the end of 2022-23.

- Amy Miles, whose work as staff governor has given a vital perspective on the day-to-day work of staff, as well as bringing her own talents and abilities to our meetings. We wish her well in her future career.
- Anne Heath, who had been an extremely effective and capable Chair of Governors during 2021-22, as well as contributing a great deal during her four-year term.
- Claire Owen, who was co-vice-chair of governors and the lead governor on Learning matters. Claire's hard work and engagement have been hugely appreciated by the governors.

We are very pleased that Izzi Wheeler has joined us as the elected staff governor, and that Hayley McKenna and Linda Buchanan-Barrow, who have been associate governors since 2021, have moved to fill the vacancies.

I am very grateful to all my fellow governors for their hard work over the past year. It has been a pleasure to work alongside such a capable and dedicated team.

Phil Heaphy

Chair of Governors

October 2023