

The Roof is Leaking, Again!

Whilst the main focus of the FACE campaign (nationally and locally) is to highlight and campaign against the disastrous education cuts, another area of concern is the dilapidated and potentially dangerous state of many schools.

Gillian Shephard has claimed that government spending on maintenance and repairs in schools has increased by 15% since 1979. How is it possible then to square Shephard's claim with the daily reality observed and experienced by teachers, parents and students i.e. that school buildings are in a state of disrepair. The answer lies in Disraeli's phrase about "lies, damned lies, and statistics." Shephard has performed a sleight of hand when working out the figures. Instead of using the real education costs such as teachers' pay, she has incorporated the general inflation figures. When education costs are taken into account, the finance organisation Cipfa estimated that in 1979 spending on maintenance and repairs was £84 per pupil and in 1992-93 it had fallen slightly to £83 per pupil. In primary schools there has been a more marked drop in spending on maintenance since the mid-1980's.

Statistics present only one side of the story however, and they do not illustrate the real problems in our schools. According to *The Independent* (17th March 1995), reporting on a recent NUT survey, schools "are decaying danger zones, where infestations of rats and cockroaches are common and pupils and staff fall sick with dysentery and other diseases... More than a quarter of schools have been forced to close dilapidated buildings, and 18.7% have had pupils or staff suffering from illness or injury linked to poor conditions."

Des Conway Parent

In Nottinghamshire, 2 Schools have featured in the national press - Parkdale Primary in Carlton and Bramcote Hills Primary. At Parkdale, the roof leaks, the windows are falling out and nearly two-thirds of pupils are taught in pre-World War One huts. The school has purchased a stock of umbrellas because nearly 200 children have to cross 50 yards of playground to use a portable toilet. Even the newer classrooms built in the 1960's have problems, when it rains teachers use buckets to catch water coming in through the roof and windows. At Bramcote Hills the picture is similar with staff having to use buckets to catch the drips in the hall and resources room. This situation will worsen locally and nationally as most governing bodies, faced with reduced budgets, will choose to invest in teachers rather than capital programmes; any householder will know that putting off maintenance and repairs to a future date only builds up more and worse problems.

Just another statistic to conclude. Nottinghamshire County Council plan to spend approx. £7.2 million this year on maintenance and repairs of education properties, of which only £1.67 million was received from Central Government. The figure needed to actually carry out all the maintenance and repairs has been estimated to be between £80 and £95 million. The Council should join with FACE to demand an increase in resources from Central Government to enable our children to learn in properly maintained and safe environments.

Are you interested in joining in?
Then why not come along to the first ever
NOTTINGHAM FACE CONFERENCE
Saturday 20th May 1995
10am to 2 pm
International Community Centre,
61b, Mansfield Road,
Nottingham
All are welcome and a creche will be
available.

FACE THE FUTURE.
THE 2nd FACE NATIONAL CONFERENCE
Saturday 10th June
11 am to 4 pm
Coventry
If you are interested in attending the 2nd
National Conference, please contact:
FACE,
c/o St. Giles Middle School
Hayes Lane, Exhall,
Coventry, CV7 9NS.

YES, I want to join FACE in the fight for properly funded education for all our children.

Subscriptions are: £2 waged £1 unwaged 50p children £10 (min) Organisations/Trade Unions.

I also want to make a donation to help FACE: £_____ Please tick the appropriate box.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____ School: _____ Post Code: _____

Please send your subscription and/or donation (made payable to: Nottingham FACE) on this tear off strip to our Treasurer at: 84, Seymour Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5EF.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Fight Against Cuts in Education

NEWSLETTER No. 1

APRIL 1995

We are Winning! Build for a National Demonstration

The campaign being built by FACE in Nottingham and across Britain, against the savage cuts in education, is gaining ever wider support. The message to all those already involved in FACE and to those who want to join is clear - we are winning! We are winning the arguments about the proper funding of education, not only in relation to this years budget, but also with regard to future budgets.

Ordinary people have shown their anger at the cuts, at local demonstrations and meetings as well as at the tremendous national FACE demonstration in March. The local demonstration in Notts which saw 2,000 parents, students and governors joining 1500 striking teachers was a massive success, not least because of the activities of FACE.

Parents, teachers, governors, students and many others have organised local FACE groups based around schools or families of schools. Confidence has grown; increasingly schools are setting or considering setting needs-based or deficit budgets. These schools have publicly stated that they are not prepared to accept cuts which will result in an inferior education service for their children. Other school governing bodies who had initially decided their budgets are considering reconvening to discuss a deficit budget.

The LEA is now clearly worried about deficit budgeting. Rob Valentine, the Director of Education has sent a letter to all schools indicating recognition that many schools are setting deficit budgets in order to keep their schools running. Valentine says that such schools should provide details of how

they are going to pay back the overspend next year. But deficit budgets are being set precisely because schools need to keep the present levels of staffing in order to maintain standards. The Council have already estimated that next years budget cuts could be double this years; asking schools to provide a plan to pay back their overspend as well as considering worse cuts next year is an impossible task.

Instead we would argue that schools should send a plan to the County Council based on the real needs of the school this year and next; we would also appeal to the Council to support those schools making deficit budgets and join with us in putting maximum pressure on central government to provide more money.

Another way the council could show its support for the fight to defend education is by backing the NUTs ballot for a national one day strike and demonstration in London. The Notts NUT strike on April 4th showed the huge potential that exists for building a massive demonstration in London during the Summer term. Nottingham FACE played a major part in building the April 4th demonstration and will use all its energy to help support and build for the national strike and demonstration over the coming weeks.

Join FACE in that struggle and help keep a decent education service in our schools.

Chris Whale and Liam Conway
Parents and Teachers

JOIN F.A.C.E. See back for details

HOW ARE SCHOOLS FUNDED? A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Question: **Where does the money to pay for the running of schools come from?**

Answer: Each year schools are given money by their local council. (In Nottinghamshire this is the County Council). The council decide how much to give to each school using a formula. Most of the money given is based on the number of children in the school. If the number of children in the school falls so will the schools funds. Conversely, growing schools will get more money. Smaller amounts of money are also given through the formula for other things like special needs and school buildings.

The total amount of money given to each school is called their **budget share**.

The local council is not allowed to give a school extra except through the formula and cannot give extra because a school has more experienced teachers who cost more.

Question: **What does the budget share pay for?**

Answer: Almost everything a school needs including: -
Pay for teachers, nursery nurses, school secretaries, caretakers, technicians, librarians, midday supervisors;
Maintenance of the school buildings and grounds, cleaning, heating, lighting, furniture;
Books, equipment, school libraries, insurance, staff training, health and safety and many many other things...

Question: **What happens when a school hasn't got enough money to pay for all these things?**

Answer: That's exactly what is happening in most schools this year. School governors have to work out what it will cost to pay for everything the school needs for the whole year. This is called the school **budget**.

In most schools more than 80% is spent on staff pay. It is often impossible to save on things like heating, cleaning, maintenance, and insurance because schools have already made cuts in these areas during recent years. Usually, the only way to make big savings is to cut staff. That's why hundreds of teachers and other staff are losing their jobs locally this year.

Question: **Why are schools getting less money this year?**

Answer: Most local councils have had to cut the money they give to schools. In Nottinghamshire this is being cut by £11 million which is enough to pay for the running costs of about 40 average primary schools. At the same time there are about 2400 more children in Notts schools next year. We need about 100 extra teachers for those children.

Question: **Why can't the local councils put more money into schools?**

Answer: Councils get a lot of their money from central government - this is called the Rate Support Grant. The rest of their funding comes from business rates and the council tax. The Rate Support Grant needs to increase this year to allow for inflation, an increase in the number of school children and the teachers pay rise (which the government approved). It only rose in Nottinghamshire by half of one percent. Councils are not allowed to raise council tax to make up the extra money because of government capping laws.

Question: **What is a deficit budget and what happens if school governors set one?**

Answer: If the governors look at the needs of the school and plan to spend more than the funds they have available, this is called a **deficit budget**. School governors are technically not permitted to set deficit budgets. If they do, the financial management of the school may be taken back into the control of the local council. Until this year this has never happened in Nottinghamshire and nobody is sure what the effect of setting a deficit budget will be. Some school governors have set a deficit budget this year or are considering doing so because they do not wish to implement cuts which would be damaging to children's education.

John Klingworth

Head Teacher

F.A.C.E.: THE FACTS & THE FUTURE

This national organisation was founded by Seamus Crowe, a Warwickshire headteacher, in February, 1995. The 'Chair' and 'Vice Chair' are held by parents, Sue Lister and Mike Fredericks, respectively. F.A.C.E. is a cross-party political organisation representing the views of parents and governors who want to fight the long standing and continuing cuts to the education budget. F.A.C.E. will fight cuts this year and every year to make sure that education is funded soundly in the future. F.A.C.E. welcomes support from other interested organisations, believing that a united stand is needed to adequately fight the current cuts to the education budget. F.A.C.E. believes that a child's education should NOT be determined by the part of the country/county/city in which they live.

THE LOCAL STORY SO FAR...

* March 8th & 9th, two well attended public F.A.C.E. meetings held in Mansfield and Nottingham. Nottingham F.A.C.E. Steering Committee established.

* March 25th, **250 Nottingham F.A.C.E.** supporters join national march in London.

* Throughout March and April locally initiated F.A.C.E. and/or parent information meetings held in many schools:

Haydn Road Primary, Haywood Comprehensive, Northgate Primary, West Bridgford Comprehensive, Ambleside Infants, Kinoulton Primary, St. Ed wards Primary & Family of Schools, Ernehale Infants & Junior, Abbey Road Primary, Lady Bay Primary, Woods Foundation, Tuxford Comprehensive, Sherwood Junior, Alderman Derbyshire Comprehensive, Killisick Junior, etc.

* Many F.A.C.E. information packs requested and sent to schools and individuals.

* F.A.C.E. information stall run on consecutive Saturdays in Nottingham.

* Beginning and end of March two F.A.C.E. letters sent to all Notts. schools asking Heads and Chairs of Governors to notify parents of F.A.C.E. public meetings, and London F.A.C.E. and Nottingham NUT Demonstrations.

* April 4th, NUT Strike & Demonstration in Nottingham attracted 3,000 supporters, half of which were parents, governors, pensioners and children.

* April 3rd & 5th, two further public F.A.C.E. meetings held in Nottingham and Mansfield.

The months ahead...

* **24th April**, F.A.C.E. Bulletin to be sent to all Notts. schools.

* Continuing F.A.C.E. information stalls to be run in Nottingham & Mansfield.

* **20th May**, Nottingham F.A.C.E. Conference, 10am - 2pm, open to all. See back page for details.

* **3rd June**, F.A.C.E. supporters to join Demonstration in support of the Welfare State.

THE NATIONAL STORY SO FAR...

* February 11th, the inaugural National Conference of F.A.C.E. in Rugby.

* Six weeks later, March 25th, **15 - 20,000** marched in London for the first F.A.C.E. demonstration.

The months ahead...

* **April/May**: parents, governors and teachers to confront council candidates with The F.A.C.E. Pledge, does your candidate support the pledge to "**support and work towards a review of education funding, and support and work towards a maximum class size of 30**"? Only vote for a candidate who takes the pledge.

* **June 10th**, the 2nd National Conference, "FACE the Future", to be held in Coventry.

* **2nd National Demonstration**, FACE and other groups to organise a march of **100,000** people in London, just before the Government's "Autumn Statement" is delivered. The date is to be confirmed but it is planned to be in the late summer term or early in the autumn term.

Sarah-Leigh Barnett

Parent and founder of Notts FACE

you would like more information about:

- *any of the above activities;
- *contact details of F.A.C.E./Parent action groups in your area;
- *advice on how to set up your own local F.A.C.E./Parent action group;

then please contact:
Sarah-Leigh Barnett on
(0115) 965 4428