

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (Neil Short) 2024/2025

I am tempted to subtitle this report 'Building the Networks' as this has been the pattern for the time period since April 2024. It has not occurred randomly but has been part of a deliberate strategy, either as a group and through individual action, from all involved with the ongoing direction of NASS.

We have continued to involve members either as individuals or as schools through conversations, as part of our regular Zoom sessions, following requests for advice or guidance or through contributions to our regular Newsletters. Whilst still reflecting NASS thoughts on the major issues in the world of education, there have been regular inputs from schools highlighting a specific focus on life within a small school.

These have proved informative and illuminating giving colleagues across the country a glimpse into their specific context.

The development of Zoom as a communication tool has proved of great benefit allowing colleagues from across the country who might not be able meet face to face, the opportunity to share ideas, good practice or just have a good old moan!

Over the recent past we have tried to identify areas of focus for these twice termly meetings. These have involved members of the NASS team and the occasional 'outsider' giving insight into more general ideas and developments. We fully intend to continue to use these colleagues to provide a more specific focus on areas of interest and concern.

Through our links with Plymouth University and the growing interest in small schools as vehicles for Research, a special interest group was established to highlight these areas. Special thanks must go to Gillian Seymour for her efforts in making the original proposal and following through by organising the meetings and inviting contributors to the sessions.

As noted earlier we continue to work closely with individual schools but also as a more local level. Within the past year I have represented NASS at conferences in West, Sussex, Kent and Northumberland and been present online with colleagues from Nottinghamshire, Tower Hamlets and Cornwall. It has been gratifying to see

that even in the current MAT dominated landscape many Local Authorities are developing programmes of support and training for their smallest schools. NASS also continue to value their links with HfL and VNET who, although not within the LA umbrella, provide high quality training for their small schools.

An extension of the links with Local Authorities from across the country has been the development of a Zoom group involving colleagues responsible for small schools in these areas. Here they have the opportunity to share thoughts, strategies and maintain links concerning developments which might be utilised elsewhere. Organised through NASS this has already proved a valuable resource.

A more recent development has been a link with the Elevate MAT from North Yorkshire. This is one of several MATS who seek to provide specific support for their small schools. Discussions have been ongoing since 2023 and plans are now being developed to enhance this link more fully over the next twelve months.

NASS has been represented at two major conferences over the past year. In June 2024 I was invited to represent NASS at a conference organised by the Association of Education Advisers (AoEA) in York. This followed attendance at a similar meeting in London of the same year. It was of great value to meet colleagues from across the country and hear of the work being undertaken by AoEA. It is hoped that this organisation will be able to involve small school colleagues more fully in their work.

Last year, this report mentioned a link which had been established with the Foundation for Education Development (FED). In November 2024, Julie Kelly, the current Vice Chair and I attended their conference in Manchester. Again, it was valuable for NASS to appear alongside colleagues from across the country making the case for the role of the small school within the education world.

Just after that event I was invited to appear on a panel at the Schools and Academies Show at the NEC in Birmingham. The subject under discussion was 'Money Talks: prioritising Education Funding and Provision'. It was a valuable exercise extending our networks further.

A more recent contact has been with the Education Development Trust (EDT) and their work with small schools. Through their Schools Partnership Programme, they have been able to work with a range of small schools on a series of topics linked to their own contexts. We are delighted to make this link and hope this can be developed more fully.

We continue to work alongside Ofsted in our attempt to provide greater support and understanding for colleagues undergoing inspections. As part of their consultation exercise prior to the introduction of a revised inspection programme, we were able to deliver our findings to Ofsted in April 2025.

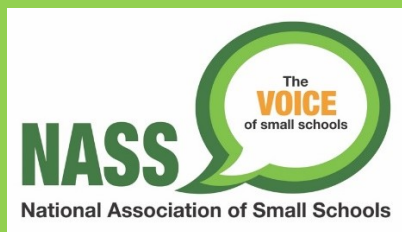
Links have been made with MPs, through a visit to Parliament, and at a local level, a constituency meeting. Here NASS material was presented, and pertinent issues

discussed. We will ensure that the new(ish) Labour Government does not forget small schools.

The online links mentioned earlier have also allowed for contact with international groups. Since Autumn 2024, there has been attendance at events organised by the Small Schools Coalition (USA) and the Micro Schools Network (world-wide). It had been interesting to hear of the range and type of small schools across the world and compare their experiences with ours in England. From these links came to invitation to make a presentation to the Micro Schools Network Annual Conference in Washington DC in May of this year – one which was accepted with great delight.

Work continues to enhance the communication links, and these now include the new NASS website. This has a range of new features to provide a broader range of information about NASS and incorporate the work being undertaken now.

Of course, all the developments made since April 2024, have relied on a dedicated and hard-working team who devote time, energy, experience, and expertise to the cause of promoting small schools and their value more widely. Along the way we have, unfortunately lost, the services of valued colleagues due to ill health. Our thanks go to Barbara Taylor and Kathryn Solly who served NASS for many years. They have been part of an evolving NASS story which still has far to go.



ACCOUNTS FOR 2024/5 (Andrew Taylor)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SMALL SCHOOLS					
Receipts and Payments account for the period					
1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024					
Registered Charity No. 1169002					
<i>Receipts</i>	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	2023	
	Fund	Fund	Funds		
	£	£	£	£	
<b>Receipts</b>					
Subscriptions	2397.00		2397.00	3087	
Donations			0.00	325	
Consultancy			0.00		
Conference			0.00		
HMRC			0.00		
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>2397.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2397.00</b>	<b>3412</b>	
<b>Payments</b>					
Newsletters	306.02		306.02	285	
Conferences and Expenses	1302.45		1302.45	247	
Web Site Management	130.00		130.00	120	
Administration	354.14		354.14	584	
Sundries			0.00		
ZOOM Renewal	155.88		155.88	144	
Projects					
Other Travel	403.41		403.41		
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>2651.90</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2651.90</b>	<b>1380</b>	
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>-254.90</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-254.90</b>	<b>2032.00</b>	
<b>Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>10954.30</b>		<b>10954.30</b>	<b>8922.16</b>	
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>10699.40</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>10699.40</b>	<b>10954.16</b>	
<b>Represented by</b>					
Co-op Bank	10954.30		10699.40		
	<b>10954.30</b>		<b>10699.40</b>		