

04 July 2017

Adequate Funding – All Schools

Dear Colleague MP

You will be aware, of course, that schools in your constituency continue to face significant financial pressures. At the same time supply of high quality teachers is unacceptably low.

Along with colleagues from 17 counties (and beyond) schools like mine are being forced to make cuts to provision and service. This is negatively affecting outcomes and care for the children and families that we serve. The situation is unsustainable.

Schools will continue to function come what may but they will be unable to function to the levels of service that we all aspire to meet. Teachers and support staff are being laid off, class sizes are growing, our curriculum offer diminished and welfare services for the most vulnerable children are constantly overstretched.

We are also very concerned that schools are being placed in the unwanted position of having to ask parents for regular financial contributions in order to prop up our devastated budgets.

These points have been made for at least two years, but unfortunately schools continue to wait in vain for improved funding. The much needed new National Funding Formula remains unpublished and no meaningful interim funding support has been put in place for the lowest funded schools.

We have been grateful that parents have made clear their support for improved and adequate funding. We also acknowledge that you and other politicians have worked hard ‘behind the scenes’ and voiced concerns about inadequate levels of school funding. The fact remains, however, that effective government intervention is still not forthcoming.

Against this background we require your personalised and public support even more. We believe that the following requirements are both reasonable and fair:

- Schools require additional investment. We need to know whether the £4 billion proposed by the government is still ‘on the table’ and whether all of the money promised will be new. A clear timeframe for this introduction is also needed.
- The introduction of a new National Funding Formula is urgently required. A timeframe for its introduction must be made clear. Yet again, schools are being asked to plan their finances effectively whilst having no idea about what levels their budgets will be set at.
- Each school in England needs to be adequately funded. Transparent work must be made available in order to outline the minimum – ‘de Minimis’ position – to allow this to happen.

- Any new or extra money must not be clawed back via additional costs or stealth taxes. Additional cost pressures placed upon our school budgets must be fully funded. This will allow real terms per pupil funding to be protected in the future.
- At a time of straitened public finances we acknowledge that there is not a bottomless pit of money. Policy initiatives must, therefore, provide clear cut value for money

In recent year school budgets have declined by 14% in real terms.

<https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/8937>

It is estimated that even in an investment of £4 billion would lead to a real terms per pupil reduction of 3% by 2022. <https://election2017.ifs.org.uk/article/a-comparison-of-manifesto-proposals-on-school-spending-in-england> (Institute of Fiscal Studies, June 2017).

Along with every Headteacher colleague I wish to continue working with you in order to gain a much better financial settlement for our schools. Representative colleagues and I would, therefore, be keen to meet with you and other local MPs in order to secure the requirements above and to ensure that the new National Funding Formula consultation is properly augmented by the urgent investment that is now needed.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

On behalf of 17 county areas:

Brighton	East Sussex	Northamptonshire	Surrey
Cambridgeshire	Essex	Oxfordshire	Thurrock
Cornwall	Hertfordshire	Peterborough	Wokingham
Devon	Norfolk	Suffolk	West Sussex
Dorset			

