

January 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

National Funding Formula – Headteachers’ response

As you are aware, we have campaigned for much improved funding for our schools for a sustained period of time.

In September 2017 the government announced its new National Funding Formula. Consequently, the Department for Education reduced the amount that it had originally planned to take from school budgets by £1.3 billion (2015-2020) and confirmed new formula arrangements for how schools would be funded from April 2018.

Headteachers have looked in detail at the Department for Education’s own funding information and statistics and have concluded that the new arrangements fall well short of what was promised.

The attached documentation shows how schools in West Sussex are being treated under the new formula. Despite promises to the contrary, your child’s education is still worth far less than that of many other counties. It is acknowledged that factors such as deprivation and English as a second language, mean that schools should be funded differently, but the disparities that will still be in place for the next financial year 2018-19 (and beyond) are impossible to regard as being satisfactory in any way.

Some basic headlines – using the Department for Education’s own statistics - confirm the following:

- **100,000 pupils in West Sussex will receive £30 million less than the same number of pupils in the average funded authority, £145 million less than the same number of pupils in Greenwich and £263 million less than those in Hackney.**
- Over the five years, for example, of your child’s education from Years 7 to 11 - therefore, this equates to differences of **£150 million** from the average funded authority and a staggering **£1.3 billion less than pupils in Hackney.**
- **In Crawley**, a secondary school of 1189 pupils will have a budget of £5.5 million. This compares to a budget of £9.3 million for the same size school in Hackney. **The total funding difference is £3.8 million (69%).**
- **In Worthing**, a secondary school of 1176 students will have a budget of £5.4 million. This compares to a budget of £9.2 million for the same size school in Hackney. **The total funding difference is £3.8 million (70%).**
- **In Bognor**, a secondary school of 1177 students will have a budget of £5.5 million. This compares to a budget of £9.2 million for the same size school in Hackney. **The total funding difference is £3.7 million (68%).**
- **In Upper Beeding**, a primary school of 340 pupils will have a budget of £1.2 million. This compares to a budget of £2 million for the same size school in Hackney. **The total funding difference is £800,000 (67%).**
- **In Shoreham-by-Sea**, a primary school of 432 pupils will have a budget of £1.5million. This compares to a budget of £2.5 million for the same size school in Hackney. **The total funding difference is £1 million (71%)**

The attached fact sheet provides examples across a range of West Sussex secondary schools, which clearly demonstrates how your child's education is being penalised by the proposed new formula. The same percentage differences are also apparent in our primary and special schools.

To give an idea of how badly children in West Sussex schools are being funded, when compared to other areas, we can confirm that, an additional £1 million of funding can purchase the following:

- **34 teachers** at an average salary (including on-costs) of £30,000
- **63 teaching assistants** at an average salary (including on-costs) of £16,000
- **2000 computers** at an average cost of £500
- **40,000 text books** at an average cost of £25

Additional funding could also be spent on a range of other crucial resources and support staff in areas such as Special Educational Needs and Disability, counselling services and intervention work for students across the ability range.

For over two years, Headteachers have run a relentlessly reasonable campaign requesting a fair deal for the children in our schools. We have absolutely no desire to see schools in other parts of the country suffer a reduction in their own funding, but we cannot accept that the children that we educate are treated so unfairly.

At times, our resources and that of the Local Authority are so stretched that we worry about carrying out the most basic duty – that of maintaining the best possible welfare provision – to the levels to that all schools should be able to.

Some schools are even resorting to asking for parental contributions to supplement their beleaguered budgets. This is entirely unacceptable.

Headteachers in thousands of other low funded areas of England, are all stating the same facts. We are delighted that a cross party group of councillors from West Sussex are also continuing to support our campaign so clearly. On 4 January 2018, councillors of all political affiliations used the West Sussex County Times to state publically that the proposed new formula is “not fit for purpose”.

In November, representative Headteachers from 5000 schools across 25 counties, petitioned the Chancellor directly. The response was both superficial and inadequate. We now need every parent to step up alongside their child's school and insist that matters must improve.

As a first action, we need our local MPs to raise their voices publically and unequivocally once again to confirm that the new funding formula proposed by the government is simply not fit for purpose. We have already received an initial statement from them (excluding Nick Gibb MP as he is the school's minister) and have attached it for your information. The fact that we have a new Secretary of State merely adds to the sense of urgency.

Our collective work – and in particular, the sustained intervention of local MPs - was important in ensuring that some improvements were made to original proposals for the new formula. We now need to have this work finished fairly and adequately. Maintaining the status quo is just not acceptable.

Every pupil sits the same examinations and all pupils have the right to adequate levels of funding and support so that their dreams and aspirations can be fulfilled. All schools are judged by the same Ofsted criteria, regardless of funding arrangements. It is also vital to our country's future wellbeing and prosperity that every child is given a proper opportunity to succeed.

Yours faithfully

Becky Linford

Headteacher