

31st January 2017



Dear Mr Herbert

Re: West Sussex school funding concerns

You will be aware, of course, about the substantial and urgent concerns that our school leaders have relating to funding arrangements for West Sussex schools 2017/18 which will seriously undermine the viability of our schools. Further, we also have grave concerns relating to the adequacy of current proposals for the new National Funding Formula and how any such arrangements are being significantly undermined by the ongoing introduction of unsustainable, unfunded cost burdens.

As such, our Governing Body is determined to register our greatest discontent with the financial constraints that are being imminently placed upon our schools and the inequitable constraints being proposed for future years.

Detailed documentation provided to you by senior Headteachers demonstrates the dreadful effect that underfunding is having upon all of our schools adversely impacting students and their parents. We must, therefore, confirm our support for school leaders, teachers and support staff and make clear our universal support for the 'Worth Less?' campaign and the proposals made within it.

As governors consider budgets presented to us we are seeing with shock and incomprehension what school leaders will be forced to put in place. This comes after years of restricted financing. Reductions in teaching and support staff, our curricular offer and pastoral/counselling care will severely undermine provision within our school and all others. Governors are being asked to contemplate the severest diminution of skills and resources that they are able to offer students in their schools. This is not acceptable!

In the first instance, £20million of emergency funding should be provided for West Sussex schools in 2017/18. After this, the new National Funding Formula - the introduction of which is broadly welcomed - must not be undermined by substantial unfunded cost burdens.

As governors, we freely give our time and expertise on behalf of children and families within our communities. As legal custodians of our schools, we cannot, therefore, sit idly by as our institutions and school leaders are placed in an impossible financial situation.

We must also make clear that governing bodies are giving serious consideration to direct action to ensure that the Department for Education understands the power of our concerns. To be specific, governing bodies are actively considering:

- Withdrawing and/or suspending our voluntary services
- Refusing to sign off budgets for 2017/18
- Setting deficit budgets (maintained schools)
- Reserving the right to take future actions should matters not improve

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss matters further but must emphasise that our time frame is very tight as we look towards setting budgets for April 1 2017.

Yours sincerely

Upper Beeding Primary School Governing Body