



Headteacher – Ms E Ellis BA, MA

29th March 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

School Funding Crisis in Schools and Academies

I am writing to you on behalf of the staff and Governors of our school.

As we are sure you are aware given recent press and news coverage, all schools nationally are facing a funding crisis. This will mean larger classes, staffing reductions and significantly reduced opportunities for our students. The secondary schools and academies in Hertfordshire are no exception to what is a concern nationally.

We have now faced several years of budget reductions. The Government would have you believe otherwise – they say school funding is protected. The Government tells us that there is more money in the education system than ever before, which there is, for the simple reason that there are more children in the system. The truth for our schools is that we are receiving the same amount per pupil for an 11-16 year-old as we have done for a number of years – the so called ‘flat cash settlement’, whilst the costs of running our schools has been rising year on year. Our funding for post 16 students has been reduced in real terms for a number of years.

Since 2012, schools have been faced with these rising costs but with no extra money:

- 5.3% increase in local government employer pension contributions
- 2.3% increase in teachers’ pension employer contribution costs
- 3.4% increase in National Insurance contributions from April 2016
- 4% teacher salary increases (1% annually)
- new courses and resources costs as the government have completely changed GCSE and A-Level specifications, with associated costs for staff training

These cuts have resulted in the funding that we receive for each pupil being reduced in real terms by 35% to 45% per pupil because the costs for schools have risen. In addition, from April this year many schools will have to pay an Apprenticeship Levy of between £15,000 and £18,000 per year and our Post 16 funding has been reduced by around 12% in the last 5 years.

Our schools are all affected in different ways and we have all been making efficiencies now for some time. Many of us have already increased class sizes and removed courses with low uptake. We have reduced the amount of support that we can offer to students and reduced training for teachers. The funding which we have used for extracurricular and other activities which enhance the learning experience for our young people has been cut or removed. The next step for many schools now will be to further reduce staffing and cut jobs.

We are reaching crisis point and the very real danger for all of us is that we are reaching a point where our outgoings exceed our income. Unfortunately, the proposed National Funding Formula will leave the majority of us no better off and after further increased employment costs which are imminent, worse off for years to come.



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The impact this is having for your children is significant and we are facing a vastly reduced capacity to ensure that all children's' needs are met. It is only because of the utter dedication and commitment of the staff in our schools, who give up their own precious and limited time, that you may not have yet noticed a deterioration in what we are able to provide.

It is because of our serious concerns that we are writing this letter. Firstly, we ask that you lobby your MP (see below) to express your concerns that our schools have been so poorly funded and that the new proposals will ensure underfunding continues into the future. Secondly, we write so that you may understand that, without improvement in this situation, additional time, resources, support and interventions for your child may no longer be available; we no longer have the resources to deliver many of them.

The welfare of the children is our central concern and every individual staff member in our school will remain utterly dedicated to your children, to ensuring they are happy and they succeed. However, we do need to let you know about the realities that we are facing.

We urge you to write to your MP, write to the Government, to the Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening; the Minister for Schools, Nick Gibb; the Prime Minister and the local press. Write to your local County Councillors. The Government has put aside millions of pounds for academisation, grammar schools and to support new free schools – so they do have the power to fund education fairly and reasonably.

We need your help because doing nothing and changing nothing will mean a vastly reduced education system for all children, whatever their background or abilities.

Yours faithfully

Ms E Ellis
Headteacher

Local MP contact details:

Hitchin and Harpenden: Peter Lilley MP
NE Hertfordshire: Sir Oliver Heald MP

peter.lilley.mp@parliament.uk
oliver.heald.mp@parliament.uk

County councillor contact details can be found here:

<https://cmis.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertfordshire/CountyCouncillors.aspx>

You may also want to consider contacting:

Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening
The Minister for Schools, Nick Gibb
Prime Minister, Theresa May
Chancellor of the Exchequer, Phillip Hammond

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