

29 March 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

Funding Crisis in Education

We are sure that parents and others in the community will be aware of the growing educational funding crisis. Given that there was little in the March 2017 Budget statement to address this, we are joining with schools in the Bath Education Trust to distribute this letter and make you aware of our concern.

For some time, schools have been making the cuts and adjustments that everyone would expect in order to operate within a difficult financial climate. However, as time goes on, this becomes significantly more difficult as we have more children in the education system and costs are rising: namely, the new national pay settlement for staff, employers' NI (which has risen by 1.4% from last April) and increased pension contributions payable by schools. No additional money is provided to meet all these extra costs. To put it in context, it is estimated by the Education Policy Institute that the average real terms loss for a secondary school by 2020 will be approximately £290,000 pa, none of which is funded, so all schools will need to reduce spending by at least this amount. Further, the Government is committed to building new free schools by redistributing the existing education budget rather than increasing it and there has been inadequate funding for maintaining our buildings properly.

The National Audit Office has warned that schools in England face having to find savings of £3 billion, equating to an 8% real terms cut in funding per pupil by 2019/20, the worst for decades.

Our schools face these serious challenges in funding and there is already widespread concern across the school system as we anticipate the impact of the above. In a survey of school leaders commissioned by the ASCL: <http://www.ascl.org.uk> (which is the main secondary-based professional association for educational leaders) and published on March 10th:-

- 95% say support services have had to be cut back
- 68% say enrichment activities have had to be reduced
- 82% say class sizes have had to increase
- 72% of respondents, whose schools teach Key Stage 4 (14-16 year-olds), say courses have had to be removed from their GCSE options or vocational subjects
- 79% of respondents, whose schools teach Key Stage 5 (16-18 year-olds), say courses have had to be removed from their A level options or vocational subjects

The Government's response is that more money than ever is being provided for education. This may be true but the education budget has not kept pace with the rising costs as detailed above.

Since this situation will now be affecting the education of all state school pupils, we think it is time for us to make our voices heard. If you agree, please lobby your local MP:

Bath: ben.howlett.mp@parliament.uk;

Keynsham & Saltford: jacob.reesmogg.mp@parliament.uk

South Gloucestershire: chris.skidmore.mp@parliament.uk

They are aware that they may be receiving additional correspondence. Or please contact Justine Greening, the Secretary of State for Education, directly: greeningj@parliament.uk

It is likely that many parents and carers reading this letter have children who are much younger and who will be affected for some time. They only have one chance; increases in funding in the distant future may make little difference to them. We would be grateful if you gave this issue some consideration and if you think it appropriate, please make your voice heard.

Yours sincerely

Andrea Arlidge
CEO

Wellsway Multi Academy Trust family of schools:

Aspire Academy

IKB Academy

Saltford Primary School

St John's Primary School

Sir Bernard Lovell Academy

The Bath Studio School

Wellsway School

Bath Education Trust member schools:

Aspire Academy

Beechen Cliff School

Ralph Allen School

Hayesfield School

Oldfield School

St Gregory's School

St Mark's School

The Bath Studio School

Threeways School

Wellsway School