



February 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

### **National Funding Formula**

As you are aware, Headteachers across Devon have campaigned for much improved funding for our schools for a sustained period of time and together we have created this letter to help you to see the facts around funding for education.

As a group of Devon Headteachers we are asking parents to write to our local MPs to inform them of your views around your children's education effectively being 'worth less' than schools in other parts of the country. Our local MP is Sarah Wollaston, who I understand is very supportive of our cause, but can use your communication to prove the strong sense of feeling from our area when she addresses central government.

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.

This chart below shows how schools in Devon are being treated under the new formula. Despite promises to the contrary, your child's education is still worth less than that of many others. It is acknowledged that factors such as deprivation, 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.

How does the new funding formula impact upon schools and academies in Devon?

Average per pupil unit funding	Primary (PUF)	Secondary (SUF)
Average per pupil funding Devon	£3,880	£4,884
Average per pupil funding Greenwich	£4,898	£6,451
Average per pupil funding Hackney	£5,887	£7,840

*For us as The Grove School if we were funded as Greenwich children are then Devon would receive an additional £272,824 per year, or as Hackney then Devon would receive an additional £537,876 per year for us as a school.*

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

- **Pupils in Devon will receive around £30 million less** than the same number of pupils in the average funded authority, **£139 million less than the same number of pupils in Westminster** and **£212 million less than those in Hackney.**

To give an idea of how badly children in Devon 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 have a reduction in their 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 our beleaguered budgets.

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 Devon are also continuing to support our campaign so clearly. On 16th January 2018, councillors and representatives of headteachers from Devon primary and secondary schools met with MPs to highlight the issue of school funding once again. The proposed new formula is “not fit for purpose”

In November, representative Headteachers from 5,000 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. Their constituents must come before any party interest.**

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. It is also vital to our country's future wellbeing and prosperity that every child is given a proper opportunity to succeed.

Yours sincerely

**Hilary Priest**

**Headteacher and on behalf of all schools in Devon**