

## Cuts to Funding in Darlington Primary Schools

20<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

Now that the Chancellor has given his budget speech and confirmed that schools will not receive any further funding, we feel the need to write to you to explain our deep concerns about funding for education in our Darlington primary schools.

You may have heard of the National Funding Formula coming soon to our education system. This seeks to use the same formula to fund every child in English schools by the same amount. Around the country some areas will gain and some will lose. Broadly speaking, Darlington schools will get about the same amount in cash terms, but because we are faced with increasing costs, it is actually a large real terms **funding decrease**.

If you go to the [schoolcuts.org.uk](http://schoolcuts.org.uk) website you will discover that across England, schools will be £3bn worse off each year by 2020, affecting 98% of all schools. The site shows how Darlington will be nearly £7m poorer and how this affects each school individually. The predicted cuts are not made up or exaggerated; they actually come from the government's Office of National Statistics and show how each school will be 8.7% worse off. Whilst the cash per pupil amount will remain static, schools will have to pay for increases in pension contributions (5%), national insurance increases and salary rises (4%), plus any rises in the utilities, services and products that we purchase. By 2020, education funding as a proportion of GDP will have fallen to its lowest level since the 1950s. This lack of regard for the next generation really worries us.

Schools are asked to make further efficiency savings, but every headteacher will tell you that because the vast majority of funding goes on the fixed costs of salaries, efficiency savings barely scratch the surface.

We don't want to cause panic and we will do our very best to continue to provide the best possible care and education for your child, but you will agree, we are sure, that it isn't possible to do more with less. Larger class sizes and fewer resources are the main ways to cut costs. Some schools in other regions have even begun to discuss the possibility of closing at lunchtime on Fridays. We want to avoid all of this and therefore we need your help in lobbying the influential people that make the decisions.

The chancellor announced a £60bn fund to navigate the country through Brexit. Therefore we feel it is reasonable to increase education spending by £3bn per year, to cover the increases in costs. We are not a political or militant body. We are a like-minded collection of headteachers who want the very best for the children in our own schools and also across our town. We will all struggle with the funding decrease in the next few years and we would very much appreciate your help in improving the situation.

### **How can you help?**

We think there are three people who need to hear your opinion.

1. Jenny Chapman MP. Email: [jenny.chapman.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:jenny.chapman.mp@parliament.uk) Jenny is a strong supporter of young people's achievement and welfare in Darlington, but can't represent the Darlington view nationally without knowing your feelings.
2. Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for Education. [greeningj@parliament.uk](mailto:greeningj@parliament.uk) Justine recently spoke to North East headteachers, expressing her pride at being a successful product of the comprehensive school system in Yorkshire. We want the next generation of young people to be afforded the same opportunities.
3. Nick Gibb MP, Schools Minister. Email: [gibbn@parliament.uk](mailto:gibbn@parliament.uk) Nick recently wrote to headteachers in Bristol to tell them that there were benefits to schools to cutting funding. We disagree.

Sharing our feelings about a particular issue with all parents in this way is a first for Darlington. Our concerns are real. Please recognise this and help if you can.

Yours faithfully,  
The Headteachers.

Federation of Mowden Schools

The Rydal Academy

Polam Hall School

Federation of Abbey Schools

Northwood Primary School

Firthmoor Primary School

West Park Academy

St Teresa's RC Primary School

Mount Pleasant Primary School

Red Hall Primary School

Heathfield Primary School

Mount Pleasant Primary School

Reid Street Primary School

Bishopton Redmarshall CE Primary School  
Heighington CE Primary School  
George Dent Nursery

High Coniscliffe CE Primary School  
St Mary's Cockerton CE Primary School

Borough Road Nursery

Skerne Park Academy

Gurney Pease Academy

St George's Church of England Academy

St Johns CE Academy

Springfield Academy

Whinfield Primary School

Holy Family RC Primary School

St Bede's RC VA Primary School

St Augustine's RC Primary School

Corporation Road Community Primary School