

March 2017

Dear Parent,

The future of education funding in the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales.

I am writing to you as the chair of the Peak 11 group of secondary schools. Peak 11 has existed since 2004 and supports the work of all of the secondary schools across the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales. The organisation works quietly behind the scenes to support the improvement of education through professional collaboration. Recent Government funding decisions, which you will no doubt have heard discussed in the media, have prompted me to write to you to express concern about the impact of these decisions on schools across Peak 11.

The Government points to the protection of the education budget and to increases in total education funding. However, whilst total funding has risen, the amount spent per child in real terms has fallen as there are more children within the school system. When increasing costs are taken into account an average school will experience an 8% real terms cut in its funding over the course of this parliament and the situation for schools with sixth forms is often worse.

In Derbyshire schools have been historically less well funded than in other areas of the country and we have been supportive of the Government's plans for a National Funding Formula in order to more fairly distribute school funding. We are therefore very concerned to discover, now that the formula has been published, that whilst Derbyshire schools as a whole gain funding, our secondary schools will actually lose money under the new arrangements. Almost half a million pounds worth of further cuts, beyond the cuts outlined above, will hit Peak 11 schools as a direct result of the new formula.

These changes are coming at a time when schools are dealing with the biggest changes to curriculum and organisation in a generation and when the pressure on schools to deliver results has, rightly, never been higher.

Headteachers and governors have worked very hard in recent years to cut costs whilst continuing to raise standards, but cuts cannot go on forever without impacting on the quality of children's education. If cuts continue it is likely that in future all schools in the area will see bigger class sizes, less support available for vulnerable children and a more restricted set of option choices available. School trips and those extra activities that make school special are also likely to be curtailed.

It seems to us that there are two basic problems; the government is not putting enough money into education and the proposed new funding formula is badly designed and disadvantages secondary schools in areas like ours. Headteachers and governors are lobbying the government hard to think again about their plans. If you are as concerned as we are you may wish to consider contacting your MP and express your concerns.

Andrew Bingham MP: High Peak (andrew.bingham.mp@parliament.uk).

Patrick McLoughlin MP: Derbyshire Dales (patrick.mcloughlin.mp@parliament.uk).

On behalf of all of the young people of our area who depend on properly funded schools, thank you for taking the time to digest our concerns. If you have any questions about this letter please contact the Headteacher of your child's school.

Yours faithfully,



Simon Grieves

Chair of the Peak 11 Federation